

**THE ROLE OF FOOD GARDENS IN PROVIDING SUSTAINABLE
LIVELIHOODS IN THE MSUNDUZI MUNICIPALITY**

BY

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*“There are people in the world so hungry, that God cannot appear to them except in the form of
bread.”*

Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948)

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Social Science, in the Graduate programme of Community Development in the School of Built Environment and Development Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa.

I, Petros Jabulo Madlala declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been dully acknowledged. I confirm that an external editor was not used and that my supervisor was informed of the identity and details of my editor. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Social Science in Community Development in the collage of Humanities, Development and Social Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other university.

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ABSTRACT

This work examines the notion of food security, how people see and define food security, how institutions and organizational efforts seek to assist people in food security ventures, and whether such ventures can be turned into sustainable livelihoods. The study was predominantly qualitative using a Sustainable Livelihoods Framework to determine people's capabilities and capacities to generate food through food gardens, and the role played by food gardens in providing sustainable livelihoods. Thirty-seven unstructured interviews and two focus group discussions were conducted with food garden practitioners, community leaders and development facilitators. The study was done in a rural area of Vulindlela and the peri-urban setting of Imbali Township, both situated in Pietermaritzburg.

It was established that irrespective of food availability, and even if nutritious and safe food supplies were adequate and markets were functioning well, food security can still occur, and people can still go hungry if they cannot afford to buy food. The level of education of food garden practitioners was very low, and social grants were the primary source of household income. The respondents defined food security not only in terms of food access and availability, but from the broad perspective of general improvement in their well-being. This includes other factors such as poor health, illiteracy and the lack of access to social services and a state of vulnerability and powerlessness.

Access to assets and resources remains a big challenge facing food garden practitioners in the Msunduzi Municipality. Government departments, the business sector and the civil society need to come together to work as a unit in order to speed up service delivery and resource redistribution to the poor in a manner that is effective, efficient and sustainable.

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my daughter, Lindelwa. I challenge you to achieve everything your father has achieved, and beyond. I love you so much. *Sithombo senjabulo yami, sihlahla sezithelo eziconsuju lwekhetelo. Khuludlondlobale uze umile amaphiko...*

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

- AIDS** Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
- AFRA** Association for Rural Advancement
- ANC** African National Congress
- ASGISA** Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa
- BEE** Black Economic Empowerment
- CAPRI** Collective Action and Property Rights
- CASP** Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme
- CRDP** Comprehensive Rural Development Programme
- CSG** Child Support Grant
- DA** Democratic Alliance
- DOL** Department of Labour
- DSD** Department of Social Development
- EPWP** Extended Public Works Programme
- EU** European Union
- FAO** Food and Agricultural Organisation
- GEAR** Growth, Employment and Redistribution
- HIV** Human Immunodeficiency Virus
- HSRC** Human Sciences Research Council
- IFSS** Integrated Food Security Strategy
- INP** Integrated Nutrition Programme
- ISRDP** Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Programme
- JIPSA** Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition
- KZN** KwaZulu-Natal
- LIMA** Lima Rural Development Strategy
- MDG's** Millennium Development Goals
- MTSF** Medium Term Strategic Framework
- NGOs** Non-Governmental Organisations

NSDP National Special Development Perspective

RDP Reconstruction and Development Programme

R & D Research and Development

SANBI South Africa National Biodiversity Institute

SETA Skills Education and Training Authorities

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

URP Urban Renewal Programme

USAID United States Agency for International Development

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Study in its Broad Context

Food security is at the core of human survival, yet it is increasingly one of the most difficult human needs to fulfill. The intention of this study is to ascertain food garden practitioners' capacities to generate adequate food for the purposes of attaining sustainable livelihoods. Unlike many studies that have been conducted which focus on issues of access and availability of food as well as the benefits and challenges of food gardening in rural areas, this study focuses on people's ability to generate food through community and homestead food gardens in a rural and township setting, comparatively.

It is said that South Africa is the most urbanized country in the SADC region, yet most studies on food security focus on rural areas "to the detriment of a holistic view" (Crush and Frayne, 2010:18), and this omission has led to a situation where there is insufficient data on urban and peri-urban food security. This study could be seen as a scientific tool to explore food security across different settings, and thus generate and make data available on rural and township food security issues simultaneously.

The study is holistic, looking at capacities, policy and resources. It also investigates factors, and/or forces that hinder people's capabilities to generate food through food gardens. It looks at the policy environment under which food garden practitioners operate, the long term sustainability of food gardens as a livelihood strategy, and the extent to which this livelihood strategy is able to lessen people's vulnerability and insecurity.

Vulnerability and insecurity are evaluative concepts which are dynamic in nature (Duclos, 2002:6). They are concerned with the anticipation of possible future

changes that might affect people's livelihoods. Insecurity is defined as exposure to environmental risks and shocks of future events, some of them detrimental to the individual's sense of well-being. Vulnerability, on the other hand, refers to the possibility of suffering a decline in well-being, "in particular a drop below some minimum benchmark or poverty threshold". This decline is brought about by environmental shocks "against which protection is either costly or not possible" (Duclos, 2002:6).

Recent studies conducted by USAID in the KwaZulu-Natal areas, including Msunduzi Municipality, revealed that 84% of households are either moderately or severely food insecure (Tayler et al, 2010). It is also said that 80% have a monthly income under R1000 per month (USAID, 2010). Most people in the province are unemployed and they depend on social grants for survival. The majority of people do not have access to adequate safe and nutritious food at all times, hence they can not enjoy healthy and sustainably productive lives (O'Neil & Toye, 1998).

The problem with many definitions of food security is that they seem to be subjective rather than broad. They focus on issues of access, food availability and utilization, and ignore a very important dimension of food security - that of food generation. The extent to which individuals are able to generate their own food determines their food security status. It is inaccurate, misleading and dangerous to assume that when food is available people will live better lives. Food availability does not guarantee that people will be able to access that food; this is due to a lack of adequate financial capital. Food security definitions need to focus on issues of food generation at household level, food sources for each household, as well as sources of income.

People's access to adequate food depends on their income. Millions of people in the world are absolutely poor and they live with incomes of a dollar a day or less,

per person (Clay & Stokke, 2000). People not only live with food insecurity on a daily basis, but they also struggle with the many long-term consequences of poor diet. Their compromised physical and mental capacities as a result of a long term poor diet exposes them to food insecurity that continues the cycle of hunger and poverty. For food to be available, accessed and utilised, it needs to be generated at the local level, where it can be easily accessed by poor people who have limited financial resources. Hence the study focuses on the ability of food garden practitioners to generate adequate food for their own consumption and for commercial purposes. This view is supported by Amartya Sen who believed that starvation takes place in situations of moderate to good availability of food (Sen, 1981).

Sen presents an alternative approach to famine, which can also be useful when analysing food insecurity. This approach contrasts sharply with the more usual food availability approaches. His approach concentrates on the ability of people to command food through various legal livelihood strategies at their disposal, including the use of production and trade opportunities. Poverty, starvation and food insecurity is a matter of people not having adequate access to food that they can consume, even in situations where food is abundantly available (Sen, 1981). This means that food can be available for people to eat, but the issue is whether people are able to access that food.

In terms of the study that was commissioned by USAID in 2010,¹ 92% of households in the sample were ranked as having some level of food insecurity, with 84% considered to be moderately or severely food insecure. The study further reveals that 63% of households in the sample were severely food insecure due to

¹ The study was commissioned by USAID, and it was conducted in KwaZulu-Natal. Msunduzi Municipality was one of the study areas selected as a sample.

the fact that in the 30 days preceding the study they had “often cut back on meal size or the number of meals, or at least had run out of food entirely, had gone to bed hungry, and/or had gone an entire day without eating”. Thirty five percent of the population is vulnerable, living below \$2 per day. A total of 5.3 million people are living with HIV/AIDS and over a million children are double orphans ²(Taylor et al, 2010).

Food gardening is generally perceived as a practice that is done in rural areas only. On the contrary, evidence has shown that even in townships people are resorting to agriculture. The high levels of food insecurity, poverty and unemployment have prompted many people in rural areas and townships to engage in food gardening as a source of their livelihoods. According to Njokwe and Mudhara (2007:39), backyard food gardens continue to grow in popularity in the Msunduzi Municipality. The lack of natural resources such as land in townships has crippled people’s endeavours to produce crops on a sustainable basis. Many people in townships cultivate small pieces of land in their vicinity, often owned by the municipality, to produce crops for self-consumption.

Many experts in the field of agriculture see food production activities at grassroots level as a backbone of the African economy. According to Hendricks and Lyne (2009:11) about 12% of potentially productive land in South Africa is under cultivation. One of the most serious errors of judgment made by post-independence governments in Africa is the lack of political wisdom to prioritize agriculture and rural development (Rukuni, 2011:207-209). Rukuni further maintains that agriculture will continue to determine the economic fate for the foreseeable future. The extent to which food production activities can satisfy the physiological needs of human beings is dependent on a number of factors. Some of these factors include the availability of resources, the ability of individuals to

² Double orphan refers to a child who has lost both parents

obtain their entitlements³ and the level of institutional support. The apartheid system deprived many black people of necessary resources, and vestiges of the system continue to haunt South Africans. As it is, many black South Africans remain without jobs, without land, and without many other resources that would have enabled them to fully participate in the formal economy.

Food production activities at grassroots level normally take place in a form of food gardens. However, few studies have examined the extent of the role of food gardens in providing sustainable livelihoods. This study investigates the role of food gardens and their perceived benefits, using the sustainable livelihood framework. This study explores the ability of food garden practitioners to sustain their livelihoods, using different resources at their disposal.

The study also assesses whether the resources available to food garden practitioners are adequate. The role played by different institutions is explored. The cultivation practices of food gardeners are also explored. The main goal is to determine the extent of the contribution made by food gardens in (1) reducing food insecurity, and (2) providing sustainable livelihoods.

According to the Department of Agriculture (2002), South Africa faces the following critical food security challenges: First, to ensure that all citizens have adequate and continuous access to food; second, to ensure that the income of each citizen is commensurate with escalating food prices in order to ensure continuous access to sufficient food for every citizen; third, to empower citizens to make the best choices for nutritious and safe food; fourth, to ensure that there are adequate safety nets and food emergency management systems to provide for citizens who

³ According to Wilber and Jameson, entitlements refer to “the set of commodity bangles” that individual households in the community can get hold of at any given time, using their labour power (1992:15).

are unable to meet their food needs from their own efforts and mitigate the extreme impact of natural or other disasters on citizens; and finally, to have sufficient and appropriate information to ensure analysis, communication, monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the impact of food security programmes on the target population.

Millions of people have migrated to urban areas to “escape from rural deprivations associated with rural livelihoods” (Crush and Frayne, 2010:36), thus it is important to bear in mind that interventions aimed at fighting food insecurity should target both rural and urban areas. This study considers food security with a holistic view, focusing both on rural and township food security issues, but also seeking to understand food security through the experiences and understanding of community members and development practitioners. The findings of this study are applicable to both rural and urban settings. This will assist development organizations, including the Department of Agriculture, to develop and implement policies and programmes that seek to create linkages between rural and urban poverty.

The government alone cannot adequately address food insecurity. Clay and Stokke maintain that NGO’s, in particular, have played an enormous role in delivering assistance to affected populations in Southern Africa. The significant role played by NGO’s in alleviating food insecurity has resulted in many donor organizations insisting on the use of NGO’s as “the channel for food aid” and facilitators of sustainable livelihoods (Clay and Stokke, 1991). The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework is used as a tool not only to understand the benefits and constraints associated with food gardens, but also to obtain a deeper understanding regarding the role of these projects in providing sustainable livelihoods.

It is apparent that the global economic and financial dynamics, drought, climate change and unsustainable government interventions have culminated in unpredictable increases in food prices both globally and locally. The situation here in South Africa has been extremely life-threatening, affecting the poor in both rural and peri-urban areas in terms of food availability and accessibility.

The cost of living has soared to unpredictable levels. The prices of food, petrol, electricity and rates have increased dramatically, and even those who are working are getting poorer each year as their cost of living outweighs their salary increases. According to the Consumer Price Index (August 2011) although the annual rate decreased to 7,3% in August 2011 from 7,4% in July 2011, on average, prices increased by 0,2% between July 2011 and August 2011 (Statistics South Africa, 2011).

High food prices have affected many low-income South Africans as they spend most of their income on food, impacting the sustainability of their livelihood strategies. In his state of the province address, the premier of KwaZulu-Natal, Dr Mkhize⁴ (2011) mentioned that the average unemployment rate in the province was recorded to be 19,7% in the third quarter of 2010 with an annual total of 125 000 jobs lost in 2010. The situation was aggravated by the global economic downturn which gave rise to massive job losses in the KZN province as it did nationally and globally. The economic recovery has been uneven across the different provinces.

South Africa is rated as one of the largest economies in Africa, and it produces almost a quarter of the continent's gross domestic product (GDP). It is said that

Mkhize was the Premier of the KwaZulu-Natal Province at the time of writing this thesis. This speech was delivered on 22nd of February 2011.

South Africa's GDP grew by over 5% from 2005-2007 (Mohamed, 2011:17). Thabo Mbeki, the former president of South Africa, once argued that a large proportion of our population are in the "second economy"⁵ and they are unable to contribute meaningfully to the GDP because they are unemployed. In his words, they are "structurally disconnected from both the first and global economy" (Turok 2008:185).

Many have argued that economic growth does not guarantee access to better living standards for poor people. It can also be argued that improvement in the GDP does not give a holistic picture of the economic performance of a country, since it only considers output of production and therefore cannot be associated with one's sense of well-being. According to Mohamed (2011:17), one's sense of well-being is "influenced by material living standards", and the extent to which his or her health, education, and other needs are met. An important question to ask is who benefits from the output of production that the GDP measures? Increased production output does not benefit individual people in the second economy; it only benefits certain groups of elites in the first economy who have the right assets, political and/or social connections and resources (2011:17).

The majority of people in South Africa live in rural areas and urban townships, and most of them are unemployed. They derive their livelihoods from informal economic activities, social grants and family remittances, and hence they belong in the second economy (Turok, 2008:179). This often leaves the poorest of the poor even more destitute and powerless. Turok argues that because many areas in

⁵ Turok (2008:184) defines the second economy as the "peripheral parts of South Africa's economy" found in rural areas, urban townships and informal settlements. These people lack resources, assets and opportunities, and this has hampered their endeavours to sustain their livelihoods, since they have been denied the right to participate in the formal economy.

South Africa remain underdeveloped, it is “structurally inevitable” that any resources and assets they acquire during their integration into the formal economy will “inevitably leak back into the first economy” (2008:179).

There are many factors that hinder successful production of food at grassroots level. The lack of resources is an immense problem in underdeveloped countries such as South Africa. In the past, the apartheid system implemented a policy that promoted unequal distribution of resources. Access to adequate resources would ensure that people affected by food insecurity would enjoy the socio-economic benefits brought by our new democracy. Apartheid policies led to the over-concentration of resources in areas that were previously occupied by white people. This is particularly evident in the Msunduzi Municipality, where the majority of the population is made up of previously disadvantaged groupings. In 2010 and 2011 we witnessed a number of service delivery and regime change protests in Libia, Ivory Coast, Egypt and other African Countries. These protests confirm Ramphela’s assertion that political power without economic power is unsustainable. It is necessary, she maintains, to embark on a comprehensive campaign to eliminate these structural economic inequalities (Ramphela, 2008:246).

Power⁶ and resources play an important role in the fight against food insecurity. When people have no resources, as is the case in South Africa, they depend on those in power to provide those resources. It is therefore important to scrutinize the role played by power in the mobilization of resources. In a global context, this implies that if African countries had power they would be able to mobilize the required resources, which would in turn produce the desired outcomes. The

⁶According to Joseph Nye, as cited by Mbeki (2011:1), power refers to “the ability to attain the outcomes one wants and the resources that produce it vary in different contexts.”

livelihoods of millions of South Africans who face food insecurity and poverty daily depend on those who hold political power. It is therefore fitting to examine the research problem using the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework as a theoretical approach. The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework stresses the role played by resources and assets in the fight against poverty and food insecurity, as well as the role played by power and institutional support.

Another factor contributing to improved living standards and livelihoods is the extent to which livelihood strategies are sustainable. Sustainability in this context refers to the ability of food production activities to fulfil the needs of the poor on a long-term basis, and whether or not the impact of the agricultural activities on the ability to have food can be enjoyed by the next generations. It is important to ensure that sustainable food security interventions are developed and implemented in ways that will guarantee enhanced well-being, long-lasting economic opportunities and sustainable livelihoods. According to Speth (1994), sustainability requires that one not only look at adequate supply of income, land and food distribution but also at environmental issues such as lack of adequate resources and assets, climate change and seasonality.

1.2 Problem Statement

Given that there is a lack of sufficient empirical data regarding the role of food gardens in reducing food insecurity and providing sustainable livelihoods in South Africa, it is difficult to establish the best way to develop and implement food security programmes and ensure that such programmes remain sustainable, relevant and accessible to the poor. This poses challenges for organizations, community groups, and municipalities who seek effective, people-centred and efficient ways of alleviating food insecurity.

Very little research has been done concerning the ability of food gardens to provide sustainable livelihoods and the ability of individuals to generate their own

food. The findings of this study will help organizations working in the area, including local government structures, to understand the problem of food security better so that they can plan their interventions in ways that can benefit the community at large. Given that there is a lack of information regarding the factors contributing to the sustainability of community and home food gardens in the Msunduzi Municipality, it is difficult to ascertain the best way to implement a community or home food garden to ensure that it remains sustainable. Although it is difficult to define sustainability in the context of food gardening, it is important to note that the main purpose of food gardening is usually to either supplement household income, or to be the main source of livelihood. It is therefore important for food gardens to continue to meet the needs of the household, in spite of the unpredictability of environmental factors such as seasonality and climate change.

1.3 The Research Site

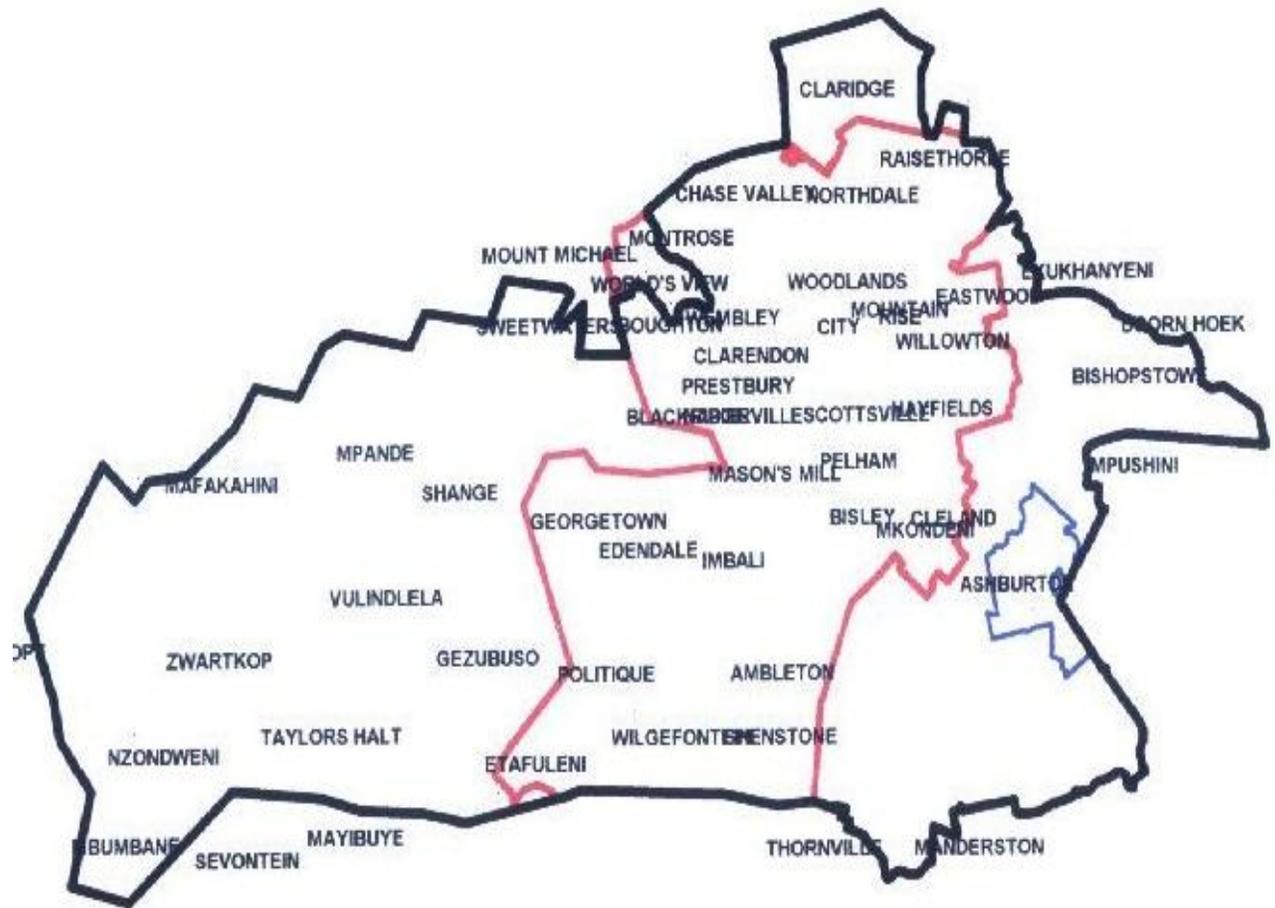
1.3.1 The Area of Msunduzi

The Msunduzi Municipality is located within the province of KwaZulu-Natal, and according to UN AMICAALL Partnership Programme (2005), it is the second largest urban centre in the province. It includes the city of Pietermaritzburg which is the administrative capital of the province, and surrounding peri-urban, semi-rural and deep rural areas. The municipality has a population of over 616,730 inhabitants. In recent years, the municipality has experienced economic decline, contributing to rapidly rising unemployment and growing levels of poverty. Unemployment within the municipality is estimated at 35% (Statistics South Africa, 2007) .

The municipality is 90 kilometres by road from Durban. The municipality is very rich in history and heritage with its residents mainly speaking isiZulu, English and Afrikaans. It is made up of 34 wards which are located in rural, peri-urban and urban areas. In terms of demographics, the municipality is quite closely representative of the province. Almost 80% of the population are black Africans

and the vast majority of these are isiZulu-speaking. Indian South Africans constitute the second largest group at around 12%, white South Africans constitute around 8% and coloured South Africans around 3% (Piper, 2010).

Figure 1.1 Map of Msunduzi Municipality



Source: Msunduzi Municipality (2011)

According to Piper (2010), it is also clear that Msunduzi is not a wealthy municipality. The average income level is to be found between the 'poor' and the 'low' categories, which in terms of the 2001 census data is between R6 000 and

R50 000 per annum. Further, it is clear that the population of Msunduzi became poorer between 1996 and 2001, perhaps not surprising given the exodus of substantial numbers of white and Indian people and the in-migration of black Africans, most of whom are poor people from rural areas. The situation has been made worse by the influx of people from other African countries.

This study investigated food gardens in a township and a rural setting in order to examine sustainability comparatively. The research was based in two different sites located within the Msunduzi Municipality. The following criteria were used to select the research sites:

- Rural and Peri-urban areas with high levels of food insecurity within the Msunduzi Municipality.
- Food Garden projects with good local NGO networks to facilitate ease of access to the sites.
- Physical accessibility of the site.
- Willingness of the food gardeners to participate in the study.
- Fully functional community gardens with the minimum of five active members.
- Household food gardens which have been in existence for at least 12 months.

The following areas were selected due to the fact that they meet most of the above-mentioned objectives.

1.3.2 The area of Imbali Township

Imbali is one of the oldest townships situated in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands, an area within the Msunduzi Municipality. It is fifteen kilometres away from the city of Pietermaritzburg. It was founded in the 1960's when people were moving away from the rural areas to look for employment in the city. The township is famous for

having been the home of struggle hero Harry Gwala and the centre of the ANC in Pietermaritzburg in the 1980s and 1990s. Whilst some people who live in Imbali Township are economically comfortable, the majority of people in this township are poor and they struggle to make ends meet. Imbali resembles the profile of the longer-standing townships (Piper, 2010).

Figure 1.2. Photograph of some of the first houses that were built in Imbali Township



The department of Bantu Administration helped in the building of the houses for the first residents of the township. The Bantu administration was formed in accordance with the Native Administration act of 1927, to provide for the better

control and management of Black affairs. Most houses in this township have 4 rooms and are made up of cement blocks with a steel door and asbestos roof. One had to be married and be working within PMB to qualify for these houses. Many people, mostly men, died during the political violence in the area. The reality today is that most households are headed by elderly women who have no husband and they are struggling financially because they depend on social grants for survival. There is a peace monument that was erected in the township in memory of people who died during political conflict between ANC and IFP. To date the township is challenged with infrastructural backblocks owed to the apartheid system, and this has culminated to poverty unemployment (Msunduzi Municipality Annual Report,2010/2012).

1.3.3 The area of Vulindlela

The study was also conducted in the area of Vulindlela, which also falls under Msunduzi Municipality. The area of Vulindlela is regarded as the largest rural settlement in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands with approximately two hundred and sixty square kilometres of land. It is situated in the south-west of the city of Pietermaritzburg. The area is divided into nineteen wards which are administered by three chiefs.

Figure 1.3 Map of Vulindlela Area



Source: John Laband and Robert Haswell (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press and Shuter & Shooter, 1988) pp 71.

The landscape and building structures in this area are very different from those usually found in Imbali Township. Houses in Vulindlela are strung out along the mid-slopes of hills and on flatter land that has been set aside for pastures for thousands of cattle. The living conditions in some parts of the area are still very much behind in terms of development. There is a lack of basic resources such as roads and health care facilities, an aspect that does not compare favourably with the urban world. These areas use buses since the taxis are not keen to service the area due to the bad conditions of the roads. During the summer rains, the buses

are sometimes unable to travel any distance off the central tarred road and commuters are forced to walk long distances to their destinations through the rain and mud. About half the households have a multiple family structure with more than one nuclear family unit living together.

An important cluster of activities is related to the construction and maintenance of dwellings. While a number of individuals undertake nearly all aspects of building, there is a degree of specialization. Some people in the area make mud blocks which they sell to generate income. Others do plastering, roof thatching and engage in other income generating activities such as herbalism⁷, food gardening, street vending, knitting and sewing.

⁷ Practice of healing using herbs. This is prevalent in Vulindlela since it is a rural area.

Figure 1.4 Photograph of Vulindlela Homesteads – Notice that the roofs of the houses are made from sheets of corrugated iron. Most of the homesteads have thatched rondavels.



1.4 Research Objectives

This study examines the concept of food gardens as part of a strategy that seeks to improve food security and sustainable livelihoods for the people in Vulindlela and Imbali township comparatively. Definitions of food security focus on issues of availability, access and utilisation, overlooking the very important dimension of food security generation. For food to be available, accessed and utilised, it needs to be generated at local level, where it can be easily accessed by poor people who

have limited financial resources. The IDS Bulletin (June 2005:1) pointed out that “getting agriculture moving” seems to be the only feasible solution to address the scarcity of food which has left many African countries hungry (Gebrehiwot, 2008:22).

Hence this study focused on examining how the people of Msunduzi Municipality perceived food security and sustainability, in order to explore their food generation strategies and the assets they have available that enable the community to achieve sustainable livelihoods. The study intended to assess the extent to which these food gardens are able to provide long-term change and sustainable livelihoods.

1.5 Research Questions

This study helped in answering the following question:

What is the role of food gardens in providing sustainable livelihoods in the Msunduzi Municipality?

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework was used to understand the above objectives. The approach is appropriate as it is not only holistic, but it is also people-centered and participatory. The following key research questions were developed through drawing on the different concepts that structure the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework. This study examined the following issues:

1. 5.1 The perceptions of beneficiaries regarding food security and sustainability:

The study sought to find out from community members residing in this municipality their perceptions regarding the issue of food security. The study investigated what definitions food garden practitioners attached to this concept. The study explored at length the point at which people consider themselves to be food secure and

food insecure. At the same time, the study explored how community members defined the concept of sustainability. The study has attempted to approach the concepts of sustainability and food security through the perspective of the community members who are participating in food gardens.

1.5.2 Access to resources/assets

The study also attempted to establish whether community members partaking in food gardens have adequate livelihood resources, whether they are able to utilize the resources at their disposal and whether they feel they need more resources in order to fulfill their livelihood outcomes⁸.

1.5.3 Extent to which food gardens are sustainable livelihood strategies

The ability of food gardens to satisfy the needs of households on a continuous basis is essential. The study will look at the extent to which food gardens are sustainable.

1.6 Thesis Synopsis

Chapter One introduces the subject matter; and it provides an in-depth analysis of food security and its context. It provides detailed background information pertaining to the problem. The objectives of the study and the research questions are introduced. Finally, detailed descriptions of the research questions and sites are provided.

Chapter Two provides the South African context of national policies towards food security and poverty reduction programmes and their support by government and other stakeholders.

⁸ This term refers to outcomes people need to be able to sustain their livelihoods

Chapter Three explores relevant academic literature. Various academic sources were consulted to obtain a comprehensive interpretation and understanding of the research problem. The Chapter also analyses the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework within which the study is undertaken.

Chapter Four briefly reflects on the methods that were used in this study. This is where I explain and motivate my reasons for choosing to use both qualitative and quantitative methods. Justification is given for using mixed methods, and how this increases the validity of the study. Ethical issues and limitations are addressed.

Chapter Five examines the respondent's demographic information. The composition of the households, income details and livelihood strategies are graphically presented. The respondent's perceptions of food insecurity and sustainability, as well as their motivation to partake in food gardens, are reported on.

In Chapter Six, I consider the role played by government departments, the local government and the private sector in reducing food insecurity in South Africa. Issues of institutional support, programmes offered by the Department of Agriculture, Social Development, COGTA and NGO's, and approaches used to provide such services are explored. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and issues of sustainability are also reflected upon.

Chapter Seven summarizes the thesis and presents an analysis of the role played by food gardens in food security. Conclusions are drawn in terms of the extent to which food gardens are able to provide sustainable livelihoods.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Food security is an aspect of well-being that relates to the economic capability of human beings to cater for their consumption and nutritional needs. It is important for our survival as well as growth and development, and it enables us to lead healthy, decent, fulfilling and longer lives. The understanding of food security has continuously changed over time to incorporate different elements. This Chapter examines how the understanding of food security has evolved. The current food security situation is explored, both in South Africa and globally. The Chapter also examines the role of agriculture, with a specific focus on homestead and community gardening in reducing food insecurity. Various alternative measures and approaches suggested in local and international literature are presented and analysed.

2.2 The Definitions and Dimensions of Food Security

Hunger, malnutrition, poverty and food insecurity are “nested concepts that drive each other in a vicious cycle”, generating a hunger-poverty trap (World Food Programme, 2009:19). It was only after World War II that concerted international efforts to eliminate food insecurity were initiated on a global scale. The United Nations was formed in the 1940s, with one of its goals to reduce food insecurity which was the result of the Second World War. Hence it created the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) which would be responsible for organizing and strengthening international efforts in food-related matters.

At a country level, the term food security is used to describe whether a country has access to enough food to meet dietary energy requirements. National food security was used by some to mean self-sufficiency, i.e. the country produces the sufficient

food that it needs or that which its population demands (Andersen, 2009). The basic definition of food security is that it refers to the ability of individuals to obtain sufficient food on a day-to-day basis. Internationally, food security is defined as the ability of people to secure adequate food.

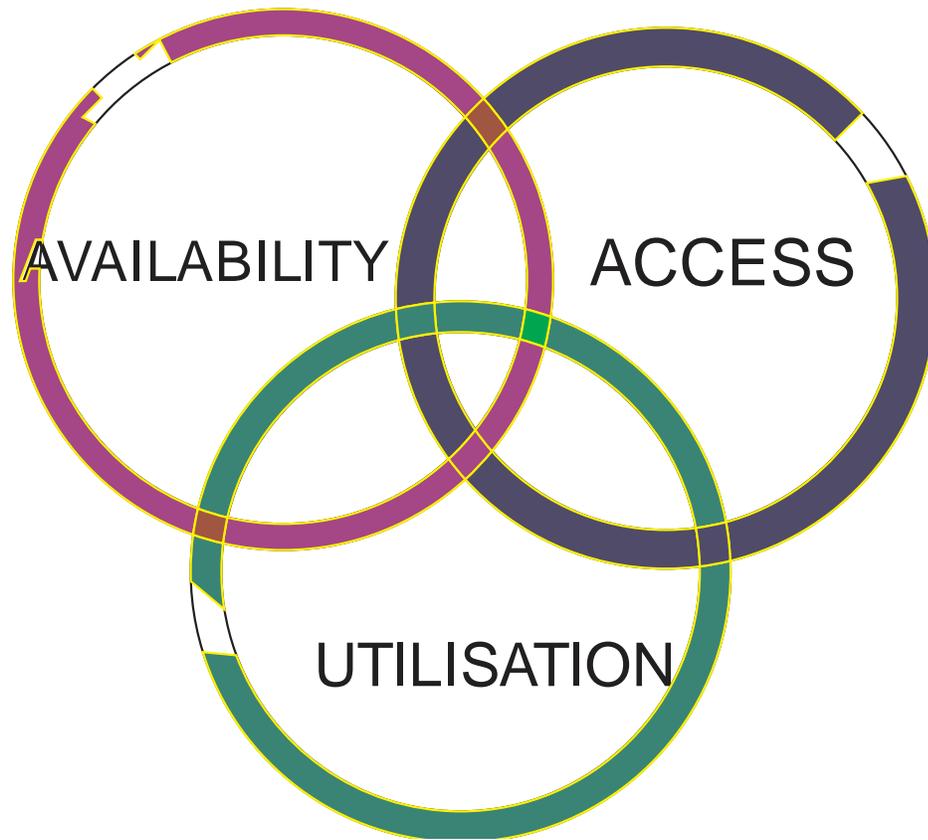
The most frequently used definition of food security is still the one proposed by the World Bank in 1986 and officially adopted by the FAO in 1996. This definition sees food security as “access by all people at all times to sufficient food for an active and healthy life” (Guha-Khasnobiset al, 2007:15). O’Neill & Toye (1998:2) similarly define food security as having access to adequate, nutritious and safe food.

Bonti-Ankomah (2001:3) and Clay & Stokke (1991) stipulate that food insecurity arises from a temporary decline in a household’s access to food. This decline usually results from a decline in domestic production and an increase in the world’s food prices. But this does not necessarily mean that an increase in food production is the solution to the problem of food security. High levels of food insecurity in a country can be attributed to persistent unemployment, low demand for unskilled labour, an unequal education system and holes in the social security safety net (Friedman and Bhengu:2008).

According to Gebrehiwot (2008:22), food insecurity is a multi-disciplinary concept which takes into account technical, economic, socio-cultural and political dimensions. Hence, the concept of food security must form part of a broad concept of food strategy, which is part of both socio-economic development strategy and poverty reduction policies. The above definitions suggests that food security is generally broken down into four different components; availability, access, utilisation and vulnerability. Food access refers to the ability to obtain an appropriate and nutritious diet and is linked to resources at the household level. Utilization involves the biological process of the human body’s ability to convert food into energy (Guha-Khasnobiset al, 2007:64).

Figure 2.1: Major Components of Food Security

Food Security Major Components



Source: Gebrehiwot, 2008:22

The above diagram shows the different dimensions of food security which must be taken into account when defining the concept. The diagram depicts food security as a multi-dimensional phenomenon which has interrelationships with different indicators. Food security cannot be captured by any single or specific indicator. It is therefore important to understand these essential dimensions, as the

interactions and combinations of these dimensions represent food security (Gebrehiwot, 2008:22).

Illness and disease can lead to loss of appetite and poor absorption of the nutrients ingested. Child-caring practices are another vital component of food security for children, as they are dependent on parents and other caretakers to provide safe and nutritious food of adequate quantity and quality. Another factor affecting food utilization is environmental contamination; it is a significant factor contributing to poor food utilization. The safety of food in the urban environment is a subject of concern. Street foods sold in townships and city streets are often prepared under unhygienic conditions, and can contribute to outbreaks of foodborne diseases (Kennedy, 2011).

Food availability can be defined as the physical presence of food at various levels, from household to national level. Availability could be the result of our own production or through the markets. The “at all times” and stability refers to the current dimensions of food security. It refers to one’s ability to understand both current and projected future status at different points in time (Gebrehiwot, 2008:22).

A limitation in the above definitions is their focus on issues of availability, access and utilisation, thus overlooking the very important dimension of food generation. For food to be available, accessed and utilised, it needs to be generated at a local level where it can be easily accessed by poor people who have limited financial resources. It is noteworthy that due to a lack of adequate financial resources, many African countries are unable to generate adequate food. The IDS Bulletin (June 2005:1) pointed out that “getting agriculture moving” seems to be the only feasible solution to address the scarcity of food, which has left many African countries hungry (Gebrehiwot, 2008:22).

The point emphasised here is that irrespective of food availability, food insecurity can still occur, even if nutritious and safe food supplies were adequate and markets were functioning well. Even in first world countries where food is in abundant supply, people can still go hungry if they cannot afford to buy food. This is a crucial insight observed by Seaman et al (2000:1) who write that there is no “technical reason for markets to meet subsistence needs, and no moral or legal reason why they should.” While it is true that regulation of prices may neither be feasible nor economically sound, people must be able to access food. Therefore countries should try to develop policies and regulations that will ensure that measures are taken to increase access to food. The markets also have a moral obligation to ensure that they offer quality produce at a fair price. In the past few years we have seen several food producers, such as Tiger Brands, being prosecuted for price fixing. In light of these criminal activities, it would be careless to conclude that the markets do not have a moral and legal obligation to meet subsistence needs.

Since it is clear that food cannot be accessed by everyone at any given time due to high prices and the fact that the number of unemployed people in South African is increasing⁹, the focus should be on how food can be generated in such a way that it becomes easily accessible to everyone, including poor people. Hence other sources of food, other than “trade-based entitlements” need to be explored. According to Wilber and Jameson, entitlements refer to “the set of commodity

⁹ According to an article published on 03 May 2011, by Engineering News (Naidoo,2011), South Africa’s unemployment rate increased to 25% in the first quarter of 2011, from 24% in the final quarter of 2010, in 2011 the number of unemployed people grew by 227 000 quarter-on-quarter to 4,36-million, while discouraged work-seekers increased by 73 000 from January to March 2011

bundles” that individual households in the community can acquire at any given time using their labour power (1992:15).

Trade based entitlements are defined as buying food from the market. Many poverty-stricken people in South Africa are not able to access trade based entitlements due to a lack of access to financial capital. Sen stresses that people affected by food insecurity should be enabled to engage in what he calls “production based entitlements”. This refers to the situation where people are able to generate their own food rather than rely on the markets. Food security can never thrive in a country where people do not have jobs, which Sen calls “own-labour entitlements”, and who depend on social grants and other transfer entitlements (Devereux, 2001).

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, which will be discussed later, stipulates that people’s vulnerability context makes it difficult for them to sustain their livelihoods. According to the Committee on World Food Security, as cited by Kruger (2007), vulnerability is an important element of food security. It refers to an unfavourable future outcome in relation to people’s inclination to fall, or stay, below the food security threshold within a certain time frame. It takes into account the full range of factors that place people at risk of becoming food insecure. The degree of vulnerability of an individual, household or group of people is determined by their exposure to risk factors and their ability to cope with or withstand stressful situations.

O’Neill & Toye (1998) argue that food security has two components. The first component refers to the ability to be self-sufficient in food production through own production. The second component refers to the accessibility to markets and ability to purchase food items. In pursuit of food security, individual countries and households utilise their assets in livelihood strategies to gain access to income

opportunities, which in turn enables them to buy food (World Food Programme, 2009).

It is estimated that 30 per cent of the World's population suffers from severe food insecurity. Approximately 840 million people are malnourished or chronically food insecure and they die needlessly due to malnutrition (Guna-Khasnabis et al, 2007:p1). Using a popular measure of poverty, 1.2 billion people in the world live on the equivalent of less than a dollar per day (Runge et al,2003). In 2009, close to 1 billion people in the world were chronically hungry, with this number likely to rise as food prices continue to increase (Lawrence et al, 2010:1). It is important to note however that food insecurity is a multi-dimensional phenomenon which has interrelationships with different indicators. The poverty measure that has been discussed above does not conclusively and accurately measure poverty since it only looks at income. It ignores other important dimensions, such as food generation, availability and utilisation.

2.3 Food Security Status in South Africa

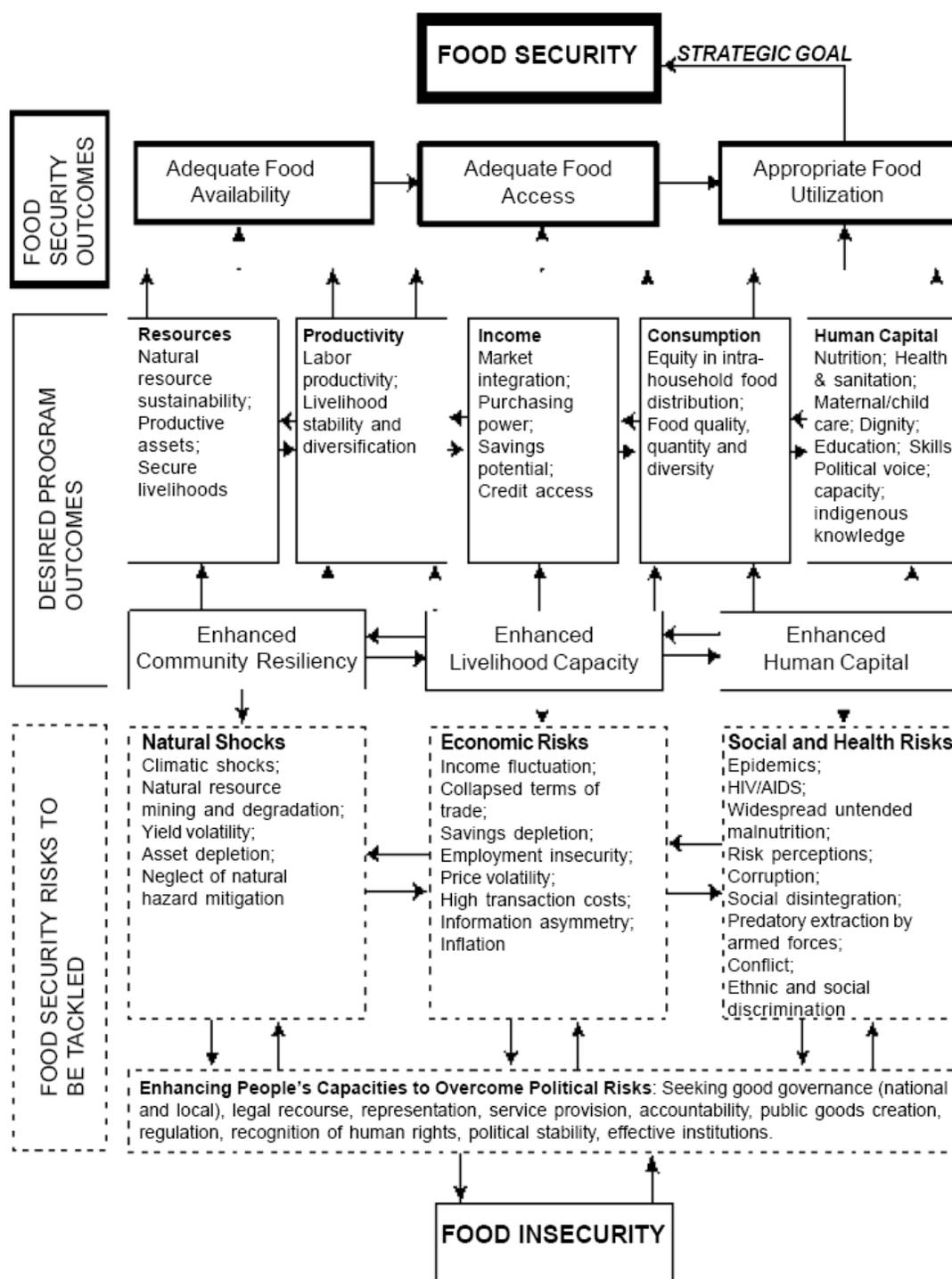
It is estimated that about 14 million people in South Africa are food insecure, and a quarter of these people are children under the age of 6 years. It is suggested that these children continue to face malnutrition due to their inability to access adequate and nutritious food (Du Toit, 2011). A 2010 study by USAID conducted in three district municipalities of KwaZulu-Natal, including the Umgungundlovu Municipality which encompasses the Msunduzi Municipality, revealed that many people are severely food insecure.

During 2008, food access problems were most serious in the Free State where 33.5% of households had inadequate access to food. This was followed by households in KwaZulu-Natal (23%), Eastern Cape (21,4%), Mpumalanga (21,5%) and Limpopo (11,9%). Meth & Dias (2004) argue that absolute poverty and the poverty gap marginally declined from 51.1% in 1995 to 48.5% in 2002, but with

population growth over the same period, the number of poor people increased from 20.2 in 1995 to 21.9 million in 2002.

Data analysis from 1999 to 2002 showed that the number of people in the bottom two expenditure classes (R0- R399 and R400- R799 per household per month) increased by about 4.2 million, suggesting that the number of food insecure people had increased. Kruger (2007) presents a conceptual framework that can assist in unpacking aspects of food in/security (see figure 1 below). Such a framework can be useful at the early stages of assessing and planning potential programmes and intervention strategies at community level.

Figure 2.2 Conceptual Framework for Understanding Food Security



Source: Erna Kruger (LIMA) 2007

In terms of the above diagram, food systems of South Africa can be influenced by environmental factors such as climatic fluctuations, soil fertility depletion or the loss of a household's productive assets, which is often the case in rural villages. Market access can be affected by economically rational decisions in the face of a wide variety of risks and opportunities. These environmental factors will be discussed in detail later in this Chapter. The above framework includes the aspects of availability, access and utilization of food. It links these aspects with resources, productivity, income and the well-being of productive individuals. It therefore embraces both direct generation of food and access to food via other resources and the markets, thus redefining people's entitlements.

Most poor households depend on government grants as well as on wage incomes for subsistence (HRSC, 2004:31). It is noteworthy that not all eligible households in the Msunduzi Municipality are accessing social grants. The issue of documentation is a widespread challenge, and it is not confined to rural areas. The research done by USAID in three municipalities of KwaZulu-Natal (Taylor et al,2010:5) indicates that supporting documentation is a key barrier to social grants access. Grant applications require documentation such as death certificates, which may be difficult to obtain for a variety of reasons. There has been a great deal of complaint about the lack of effective service delivery at the Department of Home Affairs offices.

In terms of my observations, the death of parents makes it difficult for the extended family members to obtain birth certificates for orphaned children. When they try to apply they are sent from one government department to another, but to no avail. Burial societies play a vital role in assisting families who cannot afford to bury their loved ones, but they withhold essential documents as a form of security until the family pays off the funeral costs owed. Sometimes this makes it impossible for

grandparents to apply for foster care grants in respect of their grandchildren when their parents have passed on, since their identity documents, and most importantly, the death certificates of the children's parents, are withheld by the burial society. Some people believe that burial societies should not be criticised because they are trying to help the poor bury their loved ones with dignity even if they do not have money upfront. It is sad to note that most households are unable to pay these burial societies and hence they cannot apply for foster care grants even if they qualify. Environmental factors such as climate change and other political factors have put South Africa's food systems under severe pressure (Bonti-Ankomah, 2001). This has been exacerbated by rising food prices – one of the factors that sparked demonstrations in Egypt, Ivory Cost and Libya.

The most immediate causes for food insecurity and poverty in South Africa include the demand for capital intensive goods, high levels of unemployment, low demand for unskilled labour which has left millions of people unemployed, an unequal education system established during the apartheid regime, and holes in the social security safety net. National efforts regarding food security revolve around the Millennium Development Goals. These efforts are aimed at halving the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day¹⁰, and halving the proportion of people who suffer from hunger (Friedman & Bhengu, 2008).

What the South African government seems to forget is that while food insecurity is an international phenomenon, it affects local people and therefore requires local solutions by local people. The government seems to be in a position where it wants to please the international community, and to show the world that it can indeed meet the MDG targets. They have adopted the needs-based approach that seeks to analyse food security and poverty that is affecting different communities and then identify solutions to meet those needs (Mathie and Cunningham, 2002).

¹⁰ Hopefully this is an adjustable measure in line with inflation.

The problem is that these solutions often present a one-sided negative view, thereby compromising government efforts in the fight against food insecurity. Such development efforts are futile unless they promote sustainable local economic development and growth that replaces “the domination of circumstances and chance over individuals by the domination of individuals over chance and circumstances” (Wilber and Jameson, 1992:15). This speaks to the need to afford people adequate resource or entitlements so that they can have sustainable livelihoods.

Funding is often made available on the basis of categories of needs. This approach denies the basic community wisdom that regards problems as symptoms of the breakdown of the community’s own problem solving capacities (Mathie and Cunningham, 2002). Government does not have the capacity to implement development programmes in a way that is effective and sustainable. It appears that it is important to foster partnerships between government departments and civil society, including the development beneficiaries. It is also important to bring resources together to adopt an asset-based approach, whereby we build upon assets, resources and “entitlements” already in the community (Wilber and Jameson, 1992:15). If government structures can engage communities by way of enhancing their assets, capacities and entitlements, this will facilitate long term change and thus reduce food insecurity.

2.4 Food Security Approaches

2.4.1 Welfarist Approach

Approaches used to analyze food insecurity and poverty include the welfarist and non-welfarist approaches. The welfarist approach posits market failures and resource constraints as the two major causes of food insecurity and advocates government intervention. It proposes that government should intervene to address market failures, issues of resource allocation, and to reduce poverty and food insecurity. The approach identifies the absence of competitive markets and the

undersupply of produce by the market as the key indicators of market failures (Fan, 2008:5). The approach stipulates that these market failures have made it difficult for food garden practitioners to market their produce successfully.

This approach stipulates that market failures can be the source of food insecurity. It further maintains that unemployment has, for example, prevented poor people from accessing credit and other vital resources due to their vulnerability context; hence they end up not being able to accumulate income generating assets and resources. One of the shortcomings of this approach is that it assumes that food insecurity is caused by market failures. It can be argued that while most definitions of food security put food availability at the centre, most poor people remain poor due to resource constraints, in spite of food being available.

It would appear that to alleviate food insecurity, governments need to develop strategies and policies that seek to address both resource constraints. Such policies and strategies will, according to Fan (2008:5), “give rise to a self-reinforcing virtuous cycle where public policy enables the poor to pull themselves out of poverty through their own actions.” There is also a need to achieve a general improvement in poor communities’ livelihoods by removing barriers that prevent the commercial production and marketing of food garden produce (Hendricks and Lyne, 2009:4).

2.4.2 Non-welfarist Approaches

The basic needs approach falls under the non-welfarist group of approaches. Basic needs can be defined in terms of “minimum specified quantities of such things as food, shelter, water and sanitation that are necessary to prevent ill health, undernourishment and the like” (Duclos, 2002). It is characterized by a strong focus on public goods, thus overlapping with the welfarist approach. This approach refers to the process of meeting human needs in terms of specific resources, such as education, food, water and shelter. One may argue that while

these two approaches recognise what governments cannot “supply adequately” at any given point in time, they still see government as an engine of development, rather than an enabler of development (Fan, 2008:6). This position implies that governments must be at the centre of every development initiative, and this is not achievable in South Africa given the government’s financial and administrative limitations.

There will always be interventions that are initiated by independent development agencies, sometimes without the help of government. NGO’s, the business sector and civil society in general have proved that they can play a major role in facilitating development. The major role of government in development is to develop and implement strategies and policies that will enable the poor to pull themselves out of food insecurity and hunger through their own actions (Fan, 2008:5). It is the partnership between all relevant stakeholders that will bring about change.

These approaches ignore community-based initiatives, and this reinforces the notion that real help can only be provided by agencies outside the community. This notion further weakens neighbour-to-neighbour links. An integrated approach is needed when funding community initiatives. This will help in addressing the needs of the community comprehensively (Mathie and Cunningham, 2002).

A second alternative to the welfarist approach is called the capability approach, pioneered and propounded in the last two decades by Sen. The capability approach is defined by the capacity to achieve sustainable vectors of functionings in times of difficulties. In Sen's words (1997:40), the capability to function “represents the various combinations of functionings that the person can achieve.”

Sen argued that having the capability to achieve basic functionings is the source of freedom to live well. The capability approach views income as a means to sustainable livelihoods. It suggests that people need to have cash that they can use to purchase goods and services that are valued not only by their value derived directly from their consumption, but also because of their ability to expand ones capabilities to function as a valued member of society (Fan, 2008:5).

The capability approach does not look at what people can achieve, but it looks at what they are capable of achieving. The outcomes are not important; what matters is whether people are capable of producing certain outcomes. It is also important to focus on outcomes since sustainability lies in the extent to which outcomes of development initiatives are able to last for the long term, or at least long enough to satisfy the needs of poor people for an indefinite length of time. We live in an era where true leadership is judged on how many resources are attracted to the community to enable communities to live better. They are not judged by how self-reliant the community has become (Mathie and Cunningham, 2002).

The difference between the capability and the basic needs approach is somewhat equivalent to the difference between the use of income and consumption as standard-of-living indicators. Income is seen as an indication of capability to consume on the part of the individual who has the income. The approach postulates that there is consumption only if a person chooses to enact his/her capacity to consume out of a given income. In the basic needs and functioning approach, deprivation is portrayed by a lack of basic consumption. In terms of the capability approach, food insecurity arises from the lack of incomes and capabilities (Duclos, 2002).

It is observable that each of the above approaches appeals to the concept of specific egalitarianism. This stipulates that distribution of resources must take

place in a manner that is equitable and fair. But these approaches do not address issues of trade-offs that often result when governments are not able to meet certain obligations due to budgetary constraints. In the needs-based approach, well intentioned efforts of governments and the civil society have generated needs surveys, analysed problems, and identified and implemented solutions to meet those needs.

The above approaches have inadvertently presented a one-sided negative view in the process, thereby compromising sustainable livelihoods. Critics maintain that if the needs-based approach was the only guide to addressing food insecurity in poor communities, the consequences would be "devastating" (Mathie and Cunningham, 2002). The reason behind this criticism is that the approach sees government as the engine of development, rather than an enabler of development (Fan, 2008:6), and in the process people's views, perceptions and experiences are ignored. Another problem about this position is that the government of South Africa has budgetary and administrative constraints that make it impractical, if not impossible, for it to be the engine of development. Public-private partnerships continue to be of utmost value to development initiatives in countries such as South Africa.

The approaches assume that government will always have enough in its budget to fulfill its public contract, which is not the case. An alternative approach that I felt would help in fulfilling the aims and objectives of this study is the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework. This approach is elaborated below.

2.4.3 Entitlements Approach

The entitlements approach is an extension of the capability approach. It sees the process of economic development as a process of expanding the capabilities of people. It focuses on people's ability to access their commodity bundles which

include food. It views food insecurity as a failure to be entitled to enough commodity bundles. It assumes that poor households can survive on the basis of the resources and assets they hold, and the direct use of their own labour (Sen, 1981).

According to Sen, as cited by Wilber and Jameson (1992:15), entitlements are easy to characterize in a pure market economy. If people can earn a certain amount of money by selling their labour power and other saleable objects they have or can produce, then their entitlements refer to the set of all commodity bundles costing no more than the amount they obtained when they sold their labour power or other saleable objects. On the basis of their entitlements, people can acquire some capabilities. Interventions to address food insecurity must have an aim of expanding people's entitlements.

The entitlement approach is a very useful analytical tool that can be used to address food security issues. It cites unemployment as the major cause of food insecurity. The approach sees labour power as an important commodity people can sell in order to sustain their livelihoods. Their entitlements depend on their ability to find a job. The approach postulates that people are resource poor; the only resource that most poor people are likely to have is labour power, and labour power is important within the capitalist economy. Entitlements include assets such as natural resources. An asset provides people with an opportunity to get out of poverty as it can be used over and over to generate interminable socio-economic benefits (Moser, 2005).

It ignores however other livelihood strategies that do not necessary involve selling labour power. Such strategies include food gardens and other income generating projects. The approach focuses more on capabilities and entitlements, and ignores

the sustainability of outcomes that come after people have accessed their entitlements.

This approach links well with the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, which will be discussed in depth below. In terms of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, development efforts can never thrive in an environment where there are no resources and capital assets. The assumption is that when poor people gain control over assets they gain the “independence necessary to resist oppression, pursue productive livelihoods and confront injustice” (Moser, 2005).

2.5 Agriculture as a means to promote Sustainable Livelihoods

Agriculture is seen by many experts as a backbone of the African economy. Rukuni maintained that one of the most serious errors of judgment made by post-independence governments in Africa, where 75% of the population is rural, is the lack of political wisdom to prioritize agriculture and rural development (Rukuni, 2011:207-209). Rukuni further maintains that agriculture will continue to determine the economic fate for the foreseeable future. He sees public and private sector investments as primary movers of agriculture; hence they provide a practical solution for achieving sustainable livelihoods. Such investments can facilitate sustainable livelihoods by improving agricultural productivity for a large percentage of the rural population.

A sustainable livelihood can be defined as a strategy of economic pursuit aimed at fulfilling basic physiological needs, while coping with shocks, enhancing assets and capabilities for the next generation (Kranz,2001). The proponents of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework argue that people need to have adequate livelihood resources at their disposal so that they are able to achieve sustainable livelihoods, in spite of their vulnerabilities. The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework sees the vulnerability context as a phenomenon that prevents people from getting out of the poverty trap. This appears to be the main difference between the

Sustainable Livelihoods Framework and Sen's entitlements approach. The latter approach postulates that people's success in conquering poverty and food insecurity depends on how many resources and capital assets they possess, and it ignores the vulnerability context in which millions of poor people live. The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework postulates that people must have links to productivity regardless of their vulnerability. The level of vulnerability in South Africa is very high given that the country is still recuperating from the vestiges of the apartheid system, which left many people resource poor.

The concept of sustainable livelihoods has most often been applied to rural areas. While it includes farming, it is emphasised that this is not the only way of constructing a living (Hebinck & Lent, 2007:11). Households apply various livelihood strategies depending on the status of their vulnerability. Community development programmes are meaningless unless they are sustainable and community-centred. This motivates my choice of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, which will be discussed later in this Chapter.

2.6 Community and Homestead Food Gardens as a Means to Reduce Food Insecurity

Food gardens have been increasingly recognised as a means of addressing food insecurity in developing countries such as South Africa. They have provided food for economically disadvantaged households and communities. They continue to facilitate greater access to social security and economic opportunities by providing fresh produce and by offering opportunities for community interaction and networking. Community garden members are afforded the opportunity to interact and share their knowledge with the other members, since most of this knowledge is indigenous (Lawrence et al, 2010:207-209).

According to Hendricks and Lyne (2009:11) about 12% of the land in South Africa is under cultivation. It is estimated that approximately one third of South African households are involved in small scale agriculture, and that the level of farming depends on land, water, seeds and agricultural equipment. In KwaZulu-Natal, 5 % of households use farming as their main source of food, and 15% use farming for supplementary food.

Homestead and community food gardens play a very big role in alleviating poverty and food insecurity. These projects can be seen as a long-term strategy that complements supplementation and food fortification programmes. Food gardens can provide poverty-stricken communities and households with direct access to nutritious vegetables that are not readily available or within their financial reach (Faber et al, 2006:15).

Community and homestead food gardening can contribute to the alleviation of food insecurity and poverty in poor communities in a variety of ways. In terms of a study that was conducted by Mpanza (2008) in Hlanganani and Bergville districts, there is evidence that community gardening conveys many tangible benefits to communities, such as physical and mental health, as well as socio-economic benefits.

Giesecke (1991:161-167) is one of the experts in the field of agriculture who believe that community food gardens provide poor communities with opportunities to use their own resources to increase their access to adequate food in a manner they consider appropriate. Stocker and Barnett (1998:179) suggest that community gardens can provide empowerment and sustainability in three different ways: the promotion of physical sustainability through food-growing; the promotion of social sustainability through fostering communal interaction; and the promotion of

economic sustainability through the use of community gardens for skills development, education and training.

FAO (2004:11) observed that homestead gardens have the following advantages:

- The location of the garden close to home reduces the risk of losses from dangerous wild animals as well as from theft.
- Species diversity and staggered planting increase the likelihood of crop survival by taking advantage of inhibition of pests and disease build-up, as could be the case in a mono-cropping system, and spreads the risk of crop failure in the case of adverse weather conditions. The problem of staggered planting is that is often affected by seasonality, land and water availability. Most people may also find it labour intensive and time-consuming to practice staggered planting, given that most people who partake in food gardening are women who also have other responsibilities.
- Home garden operations can readily be integrated into daily household chores, helping women to earn an income while undertaking household chores. It is however not clear how these women can earn an income by partaking in food gardens, since most of them do so for self-consumption.
- Home gardens can also provide environmentally sound opportunities for waste disposal including kitchen waste, paper and other materials because of close proximity to homes.

The following benefits were observed by Parry et al (2005:176-192) regarding community gardens:

- Psychological well-being through positive aesthetic environmental changes; community gardeners gain a sense of pride and accomplishment, which in turn fosters feelings of self-worth and self-confidence.

- Gains from growing food independently include the situation where gardeners are relieved of purchasing vegetables or fruits from commercial sources which creates a sense of self-reliance.
- Opportunities arise for disenfranchised individuals to join community group efforts as an active member and to take on leadership roles to work towards collective goals.

A study that was conducted in KwaZulu-Natal showed that households with food gardens experienced improved nutritional status (Aliber and Modiselle,2002). On the contrary, a study conducted in Lesotho on five districts on 538 children in households with household food gardens showed that 49 percent of the sampled children were underweight (Makhotla and Hendricks, 2004). These findings indicate that food gardens may not have provided sufficient food to make a positive impact on the nutritional status of the sampled children.

The lack of resources remains a challenge in South Africa. Many food practitioners do not have the necessary resources that can enable them to engage in food gardening. In a study conducted in Mbumbulu, Mjonono found that the ability of food gardens to contribute to sustainable livelihoods is limited by the fact that most practitioners do not own the tools required for cultivation of food gardens (Mjonono,2008). In terms of this study, only 16 per cent of the sampled households owned a plough, while one per cent households owned planters, harrows or cultivators.

2.7 Community Food Gardens: Access to Reliable Markets

Some experts believe that it is vital for the community garden projects to have a reliable and on-going access to the markets. They believe this will enable community gardens to become more independent and economically self reliant. They maintain that it is not desirable for the government to provide people with ongoing material support, as this is likely to increase dependency. When people are able to have access to the markets, the likelihood of their efforts becoming successful and sustainable is high. Income acquired from the sale of supplies produce can help in financing their inputs (Hendricks and Lyne, 2009).

According to a study conducted by Khanyile at Qhudeneni area, food gardens have a potential to address poverty and food insecurity, provided that practitioners are able to access the markets where they can sell their produce. The study revealed that access to the markets can play a vital role in local economic development and sustainable food supply (Khanyile, 2012). Another study conducted by Mkhize at Mahlabathini area revealed that out of four community gardens that were sampled, only one was able to sell their produce to the markets (Mkhize, 2011).

Fresh produce markets, informal markets and supermarket chains are three marketing destinations for small scale farmers in South Africa. Hendricks and Lyne (2009:4) believe that the challenge for agricultural growth in South Africa is to achieve a general increase in poor communities' incomes by removing barriers that prevent the commercial production and marketing of agricultural products.

Prices tend to be volatile, which reflects the realities of global supply and demand. According to the IDS Bulletin (2005:129), agricultural markets in South Africa are characterised by monopolies and lack of regulation. They serve the interests of well-established large scale commercial farmers. The lack of a productive relationship between agricultural cooperatives and the government is a reflection

of poor strategic planning and coordination on the part of the government. There are no measures in place to ensure that small farmers are able to sell their produce to the markets without any hindrance. The restructuring of the markets is needed so as to create new opportunities for small scale farmers.

Small food producers in developing countries such as South Africa can also link up with local supermarkets and other traders as well as niche markets that value attributes inherent in produce supplied by small producers. Small food producers do not benefit fully in this respect, as they do not have the right resources and assets to secure on-going contracts with the top end markets. The challenge is exacerbated by the fact that the markets value not only quality and quantity, but the continuity of supply (Hendricks and Lyne, 2009:5). The latter is the biggest challenge to small producers who neither have the capacity nor resources to produce large quantities of food. Additionally, they cannot always meet the required quantities on a continuous basis due to external factors such as shortage of resources and seasonality.

The government of KwaZulu-Natal continues to engage large corporate bodies to source some of their produce from small farmers, including community garden practitioners. This has resulted in South African Breweries procuring most of their yellow maize from small farmers in Bergville. It is hoped that more companies will follow suit. But this alone does not address the challenges of continuity of supply. It is hoped that the introduction on the KZN Agri-Business Agency will make a difference in this regard. The agency was established to provide support to emerging and post-settlement farmers. The agency is managed jointly by the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Economic Development and Tourism. Its major aim is to rescue emerging farmers whose farms are on the verge of being repossessed due to technical and financial challenges.

The resources that most small agricultural producers lack include capital to finance inputs, education and training, construction of the necessary social and economic infrastructure, marketing information and the means to ensure higher levels of safety and security for people in the community as well as their property (Turok, 2008:189).

Producers who are able to access preferred markets tend to control more land, capital and financial resources than the small semi-subsistence producers. Further, they produce sufficient quantities of quality product to keep transaction costs down in formal supply chains. For small producers to participate in the formal supply chains, they must pool their individual surpluses together and market them collectively, since they do not have financial capital to invest in inputs for production and accumulation of assets (Turok, 2008:187).

Small farmers need public policy and institutional support that will enable them to sustain their production. At the moment, there is insufficient institutional support in South Africa. This has led to the lack of a conducive socio-economic environment for small farmers, inadequate manpower, as well as a lack of monitoring and evaluation. The strengthening of governance and institutions will result in a favourable policy environment (Rukuni, 2011:218). Corruption, incompetency and government's limited capacity has led to unclear policies and strategies that are unable to identify appropriate sequencing of development priorities that respond to the needs of the poor. These issues will be dealt with more fully in the next Chapter.

Rukuni pointed out that donor initiated policy reforms have not succeeded in achieving the desired agricultural output in many countries in Africa (Rukuni, 2011:219). This is true because most agricultural support initiatives in South Africa are funded and driven by foreign donors who do not fully understand the dynamics of agricultural production in the country. Many of the flagship programmes in

KwaZulu-Natal, such as One-Home-One-Garden and Xoshindlala are funded by foreign governments. One would assume that policies regarding institutional support are, to a certain extent, influenced by these foreign donors. No wonder most of these initiatives have failed to improve people's livelihoods, because they are not "complemented by indigenous efforts to revitalise farmer support institutions," as Rukuni states (2011:219).

Poor infrastructure in rural areas and semi-urban townships constitute another important challenge to agriculture in South Africa. It is said that 50% of African farmers still live five hours away from a market, mainly due to poor road infrastructure that results in limited transport availability in these areas. Transport costs have escalated considerably in the past few years. The costs of transport in Africa are amongst the highest in the world. Poor infrastructure has left many farmers effectively isolated from regional and international markets (Rukuni, 2011:216).

2. 8. The Theoretical Framework

As stated in the previous Chapter, I used the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework as a theoretical framework for this study. The sustainable livelihoods idea was first introduced by the Brundtland Commission on Environment and Development. The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development expanded the concept, advocating for the achievement of sustainable livelihoods as a broad goal for food insecurity reduction (Krantz, 2001).

The World Commission on Environment and Development defines sustainability as the ability of individuals to meet the needs of the present "without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs" (Harris et al, 2001). Krantz (2001:12) defines the concept of sustainable livelihood as comprising the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living. He further

stipulates that capabilities refer to a person's or a household's ability to cope with stress and shocks and the ability to make good use of livelihood opportunities. He concludes that livelihood is considered to be sustainable when it can cope with stresses and shocks and maintain its capabilities both now and in the future.

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework is relevant to this study because it attempts to show how different elements interrelate and influence each other. There is an interdependent relationship between the institutions and people's livelihood strategies. It is an approach that is multi-faceted, taking into account many factors in assessing the ability of communities to be self-sustaining. Because it places a great deal of emphasis on natural resources, it becomes the preferred framework for this study with its questions on how people utilize their natural resources, that is, how they use gardening as a means of livelihood.

It should be noted however that this approach dilutes the significance of other factors such as structural economic issues and governance challenges. Issues of food security can no longer be divorced from issues of politics, governance and power (Rukuni, 2011:207). The government's failure to adhere to sound governance practices has left many of its departments ineffective and inefficient. For example, the poorly managed education system in South Africa is somewhat related to food security at both the micro and macro levels. At the micro level, illiterate individuals are less productive, and they are usually stuck in low-paying occupations and remain at very low levels of living. At the macro level, nations with illiterate or less-educated citizens cannot progress well, as the country cannot increase its outputs substantially. As a result people endure a low standard of living (UNESCO, 2003). Hence there is a necessity for African countries to broaden their citizen's entitlements by balancing natural resources with other capabilities such as education, infrastructure development and effective institutional support. These capabilities would go a long way in supplementing the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework.

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework does not adequately cater for governance and power issues. It does not adequately address issues of service delivery to the people, the impact of power relations on sustainable livelihoods, and the role of the international community. Most policies that we have in South Africa are influenced by international protocols and conventions, of which South Africa is a signatory. But the question that needs to be posed is whether Africa, as a continent, does have power to fully participate in the economy of the world.

Rukuni (2011:207) argues that Africa not only lacks vibrant and inventive leadership, it also lacks power to participate in the economy of the world. The concept of power refers to the ability of political and traditional leaders in a country, including its institutions, to achieve the preferred outcomes using available resources. It cannot be denied that availability of resources is important. For instance, South African mining companies such as De Beers are no longer owned by Africans.

This lack of resources limits the power that African countries have in the world's economy. But one cannot overlook the importance of innovative and dynamic political leadership. It is unfortunate that the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework does not consider this aspect as important. We need leaders who will not only create followers, but leaders who have the "ability to implement by mobilising the required resources" (Mbeki, 2011:2). Sound leadership and tight fiscal management in all spheres of government, together with centralising the interests of the country's citizens in the economy, are required.

The public protests that we have seen in South Africa signify that the relationship between government structures and the poorest of the poor is not always a fertile one - it seems to have broken down irretrievably. While the Sustainable

Livelihoods Framework does talk about an interdependent relationship between the institutions and people's livelihood strategies, it does not specify how people relate to the service delivery agencies. If issues of governance and power are not adequately addressed, poor people will remain food insecure. The framework is not flexible enough as it does not adequately allow relationships to be assessed across the different concepts in the livelihoods framework.

The framework also assumes that when people have adequate resources they will be able to secure sustainable livelihoods. There are two problems with this assumption. First, in South Africa we come from a past where resources were distributed in a manner that was not equitable. The apartheid government had a 'separate development' policy which ensured that only white people were able to have access to resources and assets. Black people in this country were given inferior education during the apartheid government. Most of them did not get the chance to attend school. They were forced to drop out of school to look after the livestock while their parents engaged in migrant labour that was forced onto the black population. The question that one could pose is how people who have no adequate access to resources and assets can come out of the poverty trap, given that they do not have resources and assets to convert into food for survival.

Second, even though people have access to the necessary resources and assets, such as land, which is hardly the case, it does not mean that they will be able to automatically convert those assets and resources into food. Some people are reluctant to take action that will enable them to access food. They depend on government for survival in terms of social grants. Some of these people do have certain assets with them but they are not prepared to convert them, due to apathy, lack of education, ignorance, lack of access to markets and poor infrastructure. These constraints were inherited from the apartheid regime which encouraged separate development and inequality. Resources are important, as most people

are often forced to choose between selling assets to buy food and going hungry to preserve future livelihoods. However it is also interesting to know that scholars in the field of poverty, famine and food security, such as Sen, have stipulated that whilst resource availability is important, it is not a solution on its own. For example, Sen, as cited by Devereux (2001), attributes food insecurity to what he calls exchange entitlement collapse for specific population groups. This implies that at times people may suffer, even though they possess certain requisite skills and qualifications for gainful employment; they often remain food insecure due to limited employment opportunities or networks to trade what they produce.

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework stipulates that trends, seasonality and shocks in nature, environment, markets and politics are among the factors that contribute to the vulnerability context of people (Neefjes, 2000:83). Shocks and stresses have an impact on one or more of the livelihood outcomes. The vulnerability concept allows human service organizations to acknowledge factors that impact on the livelihood activities of rural households and assist them to manage their stresses and shocks in their livelihood struggles.

Neefjes (2000:103) stipulates that there are four different types of livelihood capital:

- Human Capital – This type of capital refers to the ability of people to use their labour, which includes skills, experience and knowledge they have.
- Social Capital – This type of capital refers to an opportunity to be included in social groups.
- Physical Capital - Refers to basic infrastructure such as shelter.
- Financial Capital – Refers to cash, pensions and wage incomes.
- Natural Capital – Refers to resources such as land, water, wildlife and other environmental resources

It identifies and acknowledges factors inside and outside households that have beneficial and negative impacts on livelihoods. One could argue that the framework does not adequately define the relations between assets acquisition, food availability and sustainability. It does not explain how people can convert their existing assets into food in a sustainable manner. This is often the case in South Africa where development usually takes place within an unbalanced environment characterized by capital and resource constraints.

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework provides three insights into food security (Krantz, 2001:6). The first one recognises the fact that economic growth at both national and local level is essential for food insecurity reduction, but it also stresses that there is no automatic relationship between the two since it all depends on the capabilities of poor rural households to take advantage of economic opportunities. Whilst economic growth can contribute to the expansion of 'entitlements' and people's capabilities (Wilber and Jameson, 1992:15), it is noteworthy that as long as thousands of people remain unemployed and unable to have regular access to adequate food at all times, economic growth alone will never be sufficient to address issues of food insecurity.

Economic growth in South Africa seems to favour capitalists who are well-off and who have all the necessary resources and assets. The market economy in this country, which contains the first and the second economy, makes it difficult for government to fight food insecurity and poverty. The level of food insecurity in the second economy "makes it structurally inevitable" that the few benefits that the second economy has enjoyed from economic growth will "leak back into the first economy" (Turok, 2008:179). It is estimated that the unemployment level will rise to 33% by 2014 (Friedman and Bhengu, 2008). Economic growth is just a means rather than an end, and "for some important ends, it is not a very efficient means either" (Wilber and Jameson, 1992:14).

The second insight is the realization that food insecurity is not just the problem of low income, but includes other dimensions such as bad health, illiteracy and lack of access to social services, as well as a state of vulnerability and powerlessness. The third insight is that poor people are aware of their situation and needs and they therefore need to be involved in the design of policies and projects intended to benefit them.

While mindful of its limitations as articulated above, I used the three insights from the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework. The research questions examined how the food gardens improve the capabilities of people. The questions also explored how these projects address issues of vulnerability; for example, if the food that the projects provide is nutritious, adequate and safe, it can be expected that people will live healthier and longer lives. Last, the study considers the level of involvement of the community in the projects. These are the issues that are often neglected in contemporary studies and yet they are very instrumental in the fight against food insecurity.

2. 9. Key Land Issues in South Africa

Land Reform is an effort by different governments in the world to modify the distribution of land ownership. It is a programme designed to transform the legal and institutional frameworks for land administration. Small farmers in South Africa and other developing countries are among the social groups who are most vulnerable to food insecurity, poverty and hunger, and they usually have limited access to land and other productive resources (Ghimire, 2001). Land access by small agricultural producers in South Africa will play a key role in the country's economic and social development. The Land Acts introduced by the colonial and apartheid governments restricted access to land for black people.

Countries embarking on land reform and land distribution do so in the hope that it will lead to increased access to land by small farmers, and even family farmers, and that it can lead to vibrant local economies (Mkhize et al, 2009:9). According to the IDS Bulletin (2005), there has been a policy shift away from providing agricultural land to subsistence farmers, toward supporting the formation of a new class of black commercial farmers in substantial holdings. There is widespread consensus that there is a need to reform land tenure systems and relations in order to eradicate food insecurity and hunger in developing countries such as South Africa (Ghimire, 2001). Proponents of land reform vary in their approaches. Some propose radical land reform measures involving a comprehensive appropriation of land redistribution to the landless, and others want to see restitution of land rights that were previously taken by white people.

Recent political developments in South Africa seem to have increased people's awareness of issues related to land ownership. It is argued that in many circles land tenure is regarded as central to the solution of socio-economic problems in the country (Van Der Walt, 1991:21). The security of land tenure in South Africa is a critical issue, and it impacts negatively on community development and economic growth. Millions of people in developing countries are either landless or work and live on land that is owned by others. One of the reasons for this landlessness is attributed to the apartheid system which had a negative effect on the healthy development of our land laws. The apartheid system marginalised poor people in the country, especially black people (Van Der Walt, 1991:37)

Dudley et al (1992) believe that the problem of landlessness is not just something that affects people's wealth or security; it also has direct effects on whether or not they survive in times of food shortage. While many poor people in South Africa are tenants or work on the land, others have almost no access to land which puts them at greater risk in times of drought, flood and other causes of food shortages.

Mkhize et al argue that small farmers generally use land, labour and capital more efficiently than do large scale farmers, which implies that redistribution of agricultural land from large scale farmers to small scale farmers can bring efficiency gains to our deteriorating economy (2009:202).

It is observable that the land often becomes a scarce and valuable resource in peri-urban areas, with competing claims from the business sector (e.g. construction of housing or industry), and the agricultural sector. It is said that peri-urban agriculture can benefit by being close to urban centres, especially when they have a comparative advantage over more remote regions in having access to a large consumer market, saving on transport costs and the ability to deliver fresh products quickly to the markets (Meijerink and Pimroza, 2007). The problem is that the land is very scarce in these areas and this affect the ability of the farmers to ensure continuity of supply.

Ownership of land is likely to give incentives to small farmers to utilise it in ways that allow increases in food output. In addition to that, secure land tenure is likely to increase demand for land improvements and the ability of small scale farmers to finance their inputs by incentivising lenders (Pasour, 1990:202-204). Farmers who have no security of tenure may not be keen to utilise the land in a sustainable way; they want to get all they can from the soil in the short run, and the ability of that piece of land to produce for future generations could be eroded.

Agricultural growth and efficient management of natural resources in rural areas are largely dependent on the political, legal and administrative capabilities of rural authorities to protect their land-based resources (Rukuni, 2011:220). The absence of these capabilities results in insecure tenure rights and abuse of common property. It is believed that people who have secure tenure to the land they farm are more likely to care deeply for it and use it sustainably. They want the land to

provide for them today, their children tomorrow and their grandchildren in the future (Dudley et al, 1992). Many experts believe that land reform in South Africa has a potential to promote sustainable rural livelihoods, even though it has not lived up to that potential (Mkhize et al, 2009:202).

The formal legal position under national law states that all unregistered land is state land, and that common land is private land (Rukuni, 2011:221). It is however important to note that land titling and registration programmes have not succeeded in producing positive benefits, since the majority of people in South Africa, especially in rural areas, continue to hold their land successfully under indigenous customary tenure systems. On the other hand, evidence is mounting that the formal title deed has not necessarily increased tenure security in South Africa. We have seen more and more people, in spite of holding formal title deeds, being evicted due to financial difficulties. Thus security of tenure is more subjective than it is legal and objective.

Secure land tenure refers to a clearly defined formal, legally enforceable and long term agreement between the current or previous owner of the land and the person who is using the land. This agreement guarantees the land dweller the enjoyment of basic human rights, subject to reasonable limitations (Roodt, 2006). This relationship defines the status of the owner by defining the duties with reference to the use of land which all other persons must honour (Kenneth et al, 1956:4). While people living in rural areas do not have written agreements in the form of a title deed, they can also be seen as having secure tenure because they have informal agreements with traditional leaders who are the custodians of the land.

According to Rukuni (2011:222), land tenure security refers to the “certainty of continuous use” and is associated with the following sets of rights:

- Use rights: These include rights to use the land in ways that will satisfy your needs, for example, rights to grown crops and so on.
- Transfer rights: These include rights to sell your property to another person for significant financial gain or otherwise, or bequeath land. Some scholars have argued that this set of rights does not apply to people living in rural communities, since they do not have registered title deeds, and therefore cannot sell their properties. It should be noted that the most important thing is that these people are able to bequeath their land, even if it is not for financial gain.
- Exclusion rights: These include rights to exclude others from using or transferring your land.
- Enforcement rights: These refer to the legal, institutional rights to guarantee continuous use, transfer and exclusion rights. In rural areas these rights are enforced by traditional authorities.

2.10 Women and Land in South Africa

As stated in the previous Chapter, women are playing a very big role in small scale agriculture, especially in rural areas. But the challenge is that they do not seem to have easy access to the land with the result that their ability to cultivate it to construct the livelihoods of their households is obstructed. As Harley and Fortheringham (1999:120) once argued, poor rural women are facing discrimination and oppression from four sides, “because they are black, because they are women, because they are poor and because they live in rural areas.”

The percentage of female-headed households is very high in many African countries due to numerous factors such as marital dissolution and high mortality among males, particularly at older ages. Declines in male headship relate to lower

life expectancy of males, which has resulted in the reassignment of headship to women. These females who are heading households are generally older and poorer than males heading households due to the loss of remittances from men. In KwaZulu-Natal alone, the prevalence of this phenomenon is 39% of households (Nzimande, 2010).

It is interesting to note that after the 1994 general elections, gender discrimination and the emancipation of women received serious consideration, and a non-discriminatory clause was included in the Constitution. The Commission on Gender Equality was established in line with the new constitution, to deal with issues relating to the emancipation of women. This means they are entitled to have proper and unhindered access to land so that they can engage in agricultural activities without restrictions and prejudice.

The ANC introduced the RDP to ensure full and equal participation of all, including women, in development issues, including issues relating to land. In its statement, the ANC said, “women face specific disabilities in obtaining land. The land redistribution programme must therefore target women. Institutions, practices and laws that discriminate against women’s access to land must be reviewed” (ANC as cited by Harley and Fortheringham, 1999:158). Harley and Fortheringham continue to argue that even though women in South Africa have the right to land, in practice this seldom happens. Customary land allocation in South Africa is patriarchal and connected to traditional practices. Most women in African countries, especially in rural areas, do not have direct access to land. They only gain access through the males to whom they are attached in their families.

2.11 The Effects of Seasonality and Climate Change on Food Security

Seasonality and climate change play a major role in food security, and they are currently subject to debate in the agricultural circles. There is evidence that African

agriculture is vulnerable to these forces. According to the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), these environmental forces are responsible for the government's failure to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's). The MDG's refer to a global partnership to reduce food insecurity and poverty. A series of time bound targets are set out with a deadline of 2015 (SANBI, 2010:6).

2.11.1 Climate Change

Climate change has continued to directly affect agricultural production through changes in agro-ecological conditions, and it has affected economic growth and distribution of incomes. Climate change is associated with continued emissions of greenhouse gases that have brought negative changes to land suitability and crop yields (Rukuni, 2011:230). While the climate changes naturally at its own pace, it affects farming through higher temperatures, greater crop water demand, more variable rainfall and extreme climate conditions such as drought and floods (The Witness, September 17, 2011). Improving agricultural productivity is vital to achieving the sustainable development goal of reducing food insecurity and stress on the environment. Climate change, droughts and floods contribute to the unsustainable use of natural resources and consequently, food insecurity (Rukuni, 2011:212).

Agriculture continues to be one of the sectors most vulnerable to climate change in sub-Saharan Africa, in terms of deterioration in agricultural production and the adverse impact on food security systems. Droughts, floods and other environmental factors have continued to affect the amount of food available for human consumption (Lawrence et al, 2010:3). It is said that an average of 70% of the population in the world lives by farming; 40% of all exports earnings come from agriculture, and about one-third of the national income in Africa is generated by agriculture. The poorest members of African society are those most reliant on rain-fed subsistence agriculture for food, such as those partaking in small scale food

March/April, and the winter season from April/May to August/September (Dinar et al, 2008:34). Nowadays it is not easy to rely on rainwater alone for irrigation. Climate change, which may make temperatures climb and reduce the rains and change their timing, puts more burden on the country's scarce water resources, with implications for agriculture, employment and food security systems (Policy Note No. 21, August 2006, CEEPA). It is estimated that only 7% of the arable land in Africa is irrigated, compared to 42% in South Asia, 14% in Latin America and the Caribbean (Rukuni, 2011:208). This percentage shows that most farmers in Africa suffer from a lack of irrigation. In South Africa this can be attributed to the vestiges of the apartheid system which ensured that black people were located on the margins, on reduced land of low productivity, and this has not yet been rectified. Thus the cumulative effects of apartheid, climate change, and lack of institutional support for small farmers need to be rectified.

The SANBI (2010:59) argues that if governments are serious about fighting food insecurity in Africa, they need to ensure that poor people have proper access to adequate and clean water. This is so true because without water, food is impossible to grow. Growing food takes large amounts of water. Lack of access to proper water supply, high temperatures, droughts and flooding caused by climate change, conspire to limit agricultural yields, and this has left many small farmers suffering (Dinar et al, 2008:110-113).

Political enthusiasm would need to be harnessed to tackle the effects of climate change on food security, and to address disaster risk management issues holistically (The Witness, September 17, 2011). Dinar et al (2009) stipulate that adaptations to climate change could include effecting changes in planting dates, and moving towards the use of rapid-maturing varieties.

Figure 2.4 Community food garden in Vulindlela affected by seasonality and climate change



The above picture shows a community garden that is adversely affected by climate change and seasonality. While irrigation is an important adaptation method, one could argue those small farmers who are partaking in food gardens find this and other adaptation activities expensive and inaccessible, since they do not possess the necessary resources.

According to the Southern African Food Security Outlook Update (September 2011), much of the southern half of the SADC region was predicted to have higher chances of normal to below-normal rainfall between October 2011 and December 2011. The enhanced likelihood of normal to below-normal rains in the first half of the season implies the possibility of inconsistent early rains that may lead to a poor start of the rainfall season. The weather conditions in the eastern parts of the country have been less than favourable in the month of February, and this affected the value chain of cultivation (Southern African Food Security Outlook Update, June 2011).

Rukuni (2011:230) argues that the only way to mitigate the negative impact of climate change is a combination of community based adaptation strategies that strengthen people's capacity to cope with climate change. These adaptation strategies include improved land management systems, adjustment of planting dates and introduction of new crop varieties. However, it is pointless to talk about these adaptation strategies when access to land is still an issue. It is easy to practice staggered planting if you have adequate land and other resources and inputs.

2.11.2 Seasonality

Production of crops varies according to different seasons. Different crops will be cultivated and/or harvested at different times during any given year. Consequently, crops produced by households and community gardeners may not be adequate to meet their livelihood needs throughout the year. This may force households to reduce their food intake to tide them over until the next season (Seaman et al, 2000:12). Household income can also be affected by seasonality since there may be periods when people are unable to obtain income to meet the needs of the household.

Seasonality makes it difficult for farmers, especially small scale farmers, to produce adequate quantities of food, and this has led to food shortages and loss of employment for farm workers. Food garden projects in South Africa depend on a single rainy season for most of their primary food needs. The annual hungry season can last from a few weeks to several months, depending on the extent of food production and self-sufficiency achieved in a given year (Devereux,2009). Since agriculture forms a large part of our economy in South Africa, losses associated with seasonality and climate change can result in a major impact on the GDP (IDS Bulletin, 2005:30).

Devereux (2009) maintains that the pulse of rural life in South Africa is entirely dictated by this uncompromising seasonal calendar, but the relative success or failure of this way of life is determined by the unstable behaviour of the weather. Those partaking in homestead and community gardens “prepare their plots while waiting for the rains to start, then they plant their seeds, then they pray that the rains will be adequate and well distributed through the growing season” (Devereux, 2009:2). During this period, they patiently weed and tend their plots while watching the skies. If the rains are well behaved, their yield will be good, but if the rains are low or unpredictable, yields will be poor “and the subsequent hungry season will be long and hard” (Devereux, 2009:3).

According to Devereux (2009), agricultural seasonality arises from the production of only one or two harvests each year, which has two implications for homestead and community food gardens: (1) annual household income hinges on the size of the harvest, and a single failed harvest can impoverish a poor family with limited savings and assets; (2) families with undiversified livelihoods must survive from one harvest to the next on produce harvested only once or twice each year.

2.12 The Impact of HIV/ AIDS on Sustainable Livelihoods In South Africa

In any examination of the future of African food production, the impact of HIV/AIDS on sustainable livelihoods needs to be taken seriously (IDS, 2005:36). HIV/AIDS strips poor households and communities of basic resources and assets. Many researchers have identified HIV/AIDS as having a negative impact on the human capital base in terms of the allocation and availability of labour, which results in a loss of financial assets.

Table 2.1: HIV/AIDS Effect on Productive factors Underlying food Security System

Labor Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morbidity causes interruptions in work and reduces productivity. • Morbidity causes reductions in other important household and care activities. • The available labor is not consistent with needs based on traditional division of labor. • Seasonal fluctuations in labor and production are exacerbated. • Care-giving requirements escalate and become overwhelming. • An increase in the dependency ratio increases laborers' burden. • Migration for alternative work opportunities increases. • Increased risky behaviors (e.g., transactional sex, prostitution and child labor) are carried out. • Mortality permanently reduces the size of the labor force and the earning capacity of household.
Cash Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of purchased inputs (e.g., seed, fertilizer) are reduced. • HIV/AIDS-related health care expenditures replace household basic needs expenditures. • Hired labor or animal traction rental decrease, which reduces productivity. • School fees are unpaid and children are withdrawn from schools. • Cash demands result in more time devoted to earning cash income at expense of other activities. • Greater portion of agricultural output sold than stored for future consumption. • Poorer quality foods are substituted for better quality foods. • Food consumption by some or all household members is reduced. • Inadequate diets increase vulnerability to other food-security shocks.
Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Savings and liquid assets become depleted from HIV/AIDS-related expenses. • Household assets (e.g., roofing, household items) are not maintained or replaced when needed. • Productive assets (e.g., irrigation system, grain storage) are not maintained. • Household assets are sold. • Productive assets (e.g., draught animal, plow) are sold. • Asset divestment increases vulnerability to other food-security shocks (e.g., drought). • Asset divestment constrains recovery from food-security shocks (e.g., drought, conflict).
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have less opportunity to gain knowledge from their parents. • There is greater school absenteeism as children assume more household responsibilities. • Children are forced to leave school due to non-payment of school fees and new demands on their time. • Survivors assume new responsibilities but lack appropriate skills, and social norms act as hindrances to change. • Traditional agricultural practices and knowledge are less suitable within the HIV/AIDS context. • Current livelihood is no longer feasible or lucrative, but alternative skills are limited. • Migration increases as individuals search for new livelihood opportunities.
Local Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional safety nets (e.g., community grain storage) become overburdened. • Savings club and group lending scheme defaults stress and devastate local credit options. • Traditional customs governing remittances are overburdened or break down. • Traditional child adoption customs are overburdened. • There is an inability to fulfill customary roles related to other food-security shocks (e.g., drought, fire). • Traditions are adjusted or transformed (e.g., elimination of funeral rights). • Land tenure is inadequate to address needs of survivors (e.g., women, orphans). • Households are dissolved.

Source: Erna Kruger, 2007.

The Impact of HIV/AIDS on households, communities and societies can be analysed from the perspective of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, looking at access to resources or assets. A distinction is made between human, financial, social, physical and natural capital, each of which will be discussed in more detail below. This pandemic undermines and removes labour resources of young adults during their productive years (Muller, 2004:31-33). The impact of HIV/AIDS on sustainable livelihoods continues to spread. Households with greater access to assets and resources are better placed to absorb the deaths of family members (IDS, 2005:40).

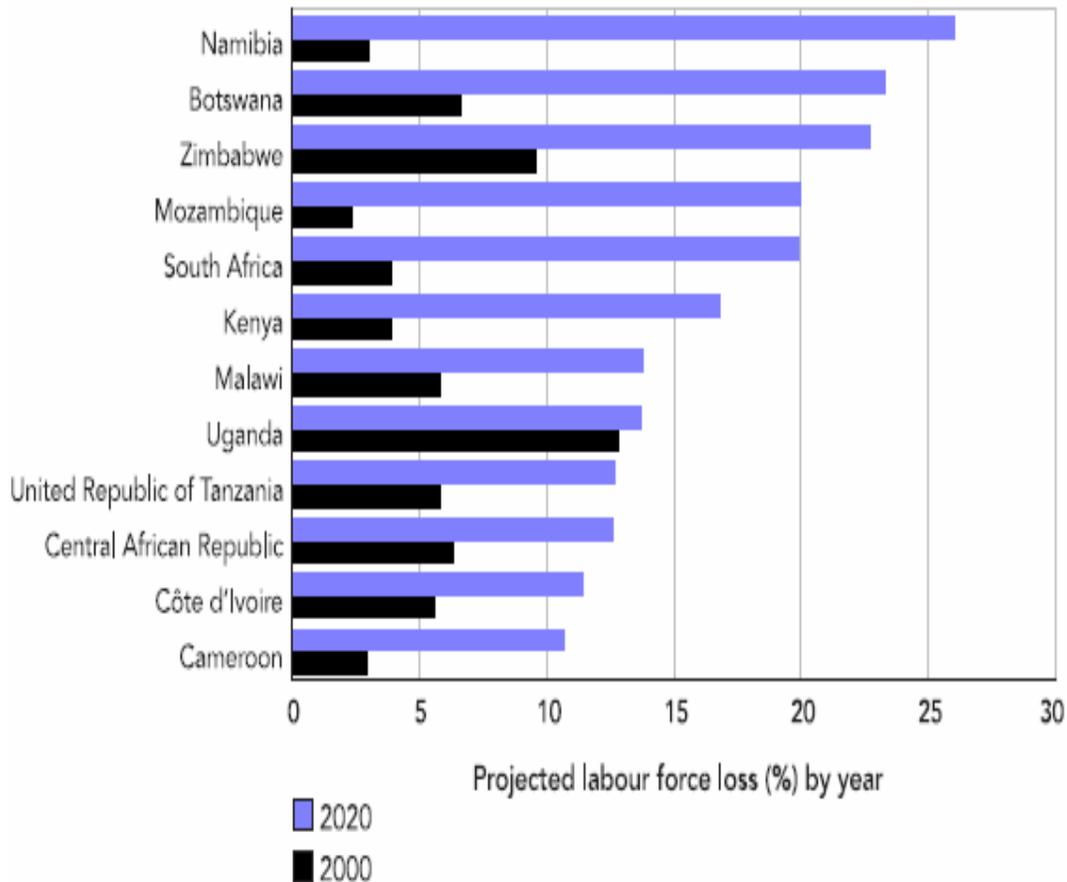
2.12.1 Human capital

The HIV/AIDS pandemic not only leads to the loss of labour of the infected person, but eventually time allocation of his or her caretakers and those attending the funerals will be shifted away from productive labour (Kruger, 2007). The presence of HIV/AIDS in already poor households poses a threat to its food security status. As over 70% of African populations are engaged in agriculture, the impact will first be felt in the agriculture sector. Through the loss of labour, it has been revealed that HIV/AIDS can have a negative influence on agricultural production in terms of a decrease in cultivated land, and a decline in crop yields (Muller, 2004:31-33).

According to Kruger (2007), human capital is not only about manual labour but also about knowledge and skills. The death or sickness of parents prevents the transfer of knowledge to their children regarding agricultural activities, such as land preparation, crop cultivation, and harvesting of crops. The death of professionals in the field erodes the capacity of the state to successfully mitigate the negative impact of food insecurity. AIDS is weakening the agricultural labour force. AIDS has killed around 7 million agricultural workers since 1985 in the 25 most-affected countries in Africa; the following table shows that a further reduction is projected in

the African agricultural labour force by 2020, due to HIV/AIDS (Meijerink and Pimroza, 2007)

Figure 2.5: Impact on African Agricultural Labour Force



Source: (Meijerink and Pimroza, 2007).

Empirical evidence has shown that HIV/AIDS reduces peoples’ productivity as people become ill and die, and others spend time and resources on caring for the sick, mourning and attending funerals. The loss of farm labour has led to a decline in production and a decline in income, leading to a decrease in food consumption, demographic changes and an increase in the household dependency ratio; a higher number of dependents are relying on smaller numbers of productive members in the household (Muller, 2004:46).

2.12.2 Financial capital

Loss of income of the infected and affected people in poor households may have grave consequences. More indirectly, access to credit or savings becomes difficult as affected households are often less credit-worthy. HIV/AIDS often results in what Muller calls the erosion of the household asset base through depletion of savings and forced disposal of productive assets (2004:45-46). It forces people to sell their valuable assets such as equipment and jewellery to pay for treatment, care or hired labour, stripping families of their last means of insurance (Meijerink and Pimroza, 2007).

2.12.3 Social capital

The generation of orphans who lost their parents through HIV/AIDS constitutes an important loss of social capital. Without access to formal or informal training, or access to resources such as the land, credit and information, their opportunities to build up a safe and adequate livelihood are minimised. HIV/AIDS often lead to loss of social capital as kinship networks are strained. It leads to the disruption in social security mechanisms as well as changes in inter-household relationships. Young farmers are no longer eager to partake in farming any longer due to the psychosocial impact of illness and death of significant others (Muller, 2004:46).

Muller stipulates that the social impact includes a drop in educational levels as children are taken out of school. There is marginalisation of youth and an increase in orphaned and vulnerable children and child-headed households. These children may constitute a burden to the community instead of an asset as future productive labourers. Social networks often provide safety nets for those having problems. Yet the stigma attached to HIV/AIDS may lead to exclusion from social networks for those needing social support.

2.12.4 Physical and natural capital

According to Kruger (2007), HIV/AIDS may also lead to the neglect of infrastructure. The lack of labour leads to reduced maintenance of soil fertility or irrigation channels. Many of these activities are labour intensive and have implications for long term natural resource maintenance. People infected by HIV are often encouraged to consume nutritious food, but no resources are in place to assist them to access such food, and as a result people continue to suffer. It is important for governments to facilitate access to adequate resources, to benefit the poorest of the poor who are affected by HIV and food insecurity. The mechanisation programme needs to be extended to this vulnerable group as it can benefit them, given their physical and financial challenges. HIV infected farmers get ill frequently and may need regular support in terms of labour.

2.13. Conclusion

Food security is often defined in terms of food availability and the level of access people have to nutritious and safe food. However it has been established that this definition has limitations since it does not focus on food generation. Availability of food does not guarantee access to food. Food insecurity can still occur, even if nutritious and safe food supplies were adequate and markets were functioning well. It has been established that even in first world countries where food is in abundant supply, people can still go hungry if they cannot afford to buy food. In South Africa, food cannot be accessed by everyone at any given time, due to high prices and the fact that the majority of the population is unemployed. In questions of food security, there should also be a focus on how food can be generated in such a way that it becomes easily accessible to everyone, including poor people. Hence, the focus of this study is on food security through gardening.

Lack of adequate resources has been identified as a stumbling block to development efforts in South Africa. This is attributable to the vestiges of the

apartheid system which are still evident. The gap between the poor and the rich continues to increase in spite of an increase in the GDP. This has led to the conclusion that economic growth does not automatically culminate in the betterment of the livelihoods of everyone. Only a few people have benefited from the growth of the economy.

Food gardens continue to play a pivotal role in alleviating poverty and food insecurity, and they can be seen as an alternative means to achieve sustainable livelihoods. Their sustainability depends on the ability of the state to offer effective institutional support. But the capacity of government institutions to offer such support is limited. AIDS, lack of adequate resources as well as other environmental factors such as seasonality and climate change, have had a negative impact on the livelihoods of vulnerable groups in South Africa. This Chapter has established the complexity of sustaining livelihoods, through discussion of the necessary capitals, power issues and the coordination of institutions.

CHAPTER THREE: INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AND POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR FOOD SECURITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

3.1 Introduction

Food security is being pursued within a broader economy that is based on capital flow and commodities. Policy instruments have to take this into account. This Chapter looks at how policy seeks to balance capital and local capabilities of people in food security. The South African Constitution indicates that every South African citizen has a right to sufficient food, water, and social security. In light of the above, the Department of Agriculture was mandated to develop agricultural policies and support programmes to ensure that South African citizens are given agricultural opportunities that will enable them to meet their basic food needs (du Toit, 2011).

Agriculture and other natural resource based activities continue to provide the basis for livelihoods in rural areas and townships. People in these areas use small pieces of land to produce crops - often municipality-owned open grounds in their vicinity. However these initiatives cannot thrive in the absence of a conducive environment in the form of people-centered policies that are pro-poor. It should be remembered that South Africa comes from a very ugly past, characterised by unequal distribution of socio-economic benefits during the apartheid regime, and this left our country in an unfavourable condition. The level of poverty, unemployment and inequality in South Africa is one dimension of the legacy of apartheid (Ramphela, 2008:24).

Harley and Fortheringham (1999:131) argue that although rapid changes are seen here and there, it is still very much apartheid business as usual on the ground, particularly in rural areas. It therefore becomes a matter of importance for this Chapter to not only summarise the relevant policies, but to also pinpoint exactly

the extent to which such policies are able to reduce food insecurity. The Chapter looks at whether there are any cracks in the policy arena, so that additional or supplementary policies are advocated for.

This Chapter discusses policy approaches that seek to address food insecurity within the context of socio-economic differentiation, as well as the role played by development agencies and institutions, including government. While the focus will be on food security issues, other broader policy initiatives concerning socio-economic sustenance will be discussed. One could argue that whatever progress may have been made through the implementation of these policies, food insecurity is still very much with us in South Africa, and has not yet begun to diminish substantially. Njokwe and Mudhara (2007) maintain that any policy that seeks to address this broader context must be based on the realisation that sustainable agriculture can contribute to economic growth and the reduction of food insecurity, poverty and pollution in the Msunduzi Municipality.

South Africa's policy on food security is to be analysed within a broader international and regional milieu. Africa is the only continent in the whole world that is not able to feed itself. Ramphela believes that no continent has ever achieved its developmental goals without being able to feed itself (Ramphela, 2008:286). Over the last 15 years, our continent has gone backwards in trying to fight food insecurity.

South Africa has one of the best Constitutions in the world, coming into effect in 1996. Section 27 of this Constitution states that everyone has the right of access to adequate and nutritious food and that "the state must by legislation and other measures, within its available resources, avail to progressive realisation of the right to sufficient food" (South African Constitution, 1996). This obliges the state and its institutions to provide appropriate means and apply appropriate measures,

including legislation, to ensure that citizens are able to meet their basic food needs.

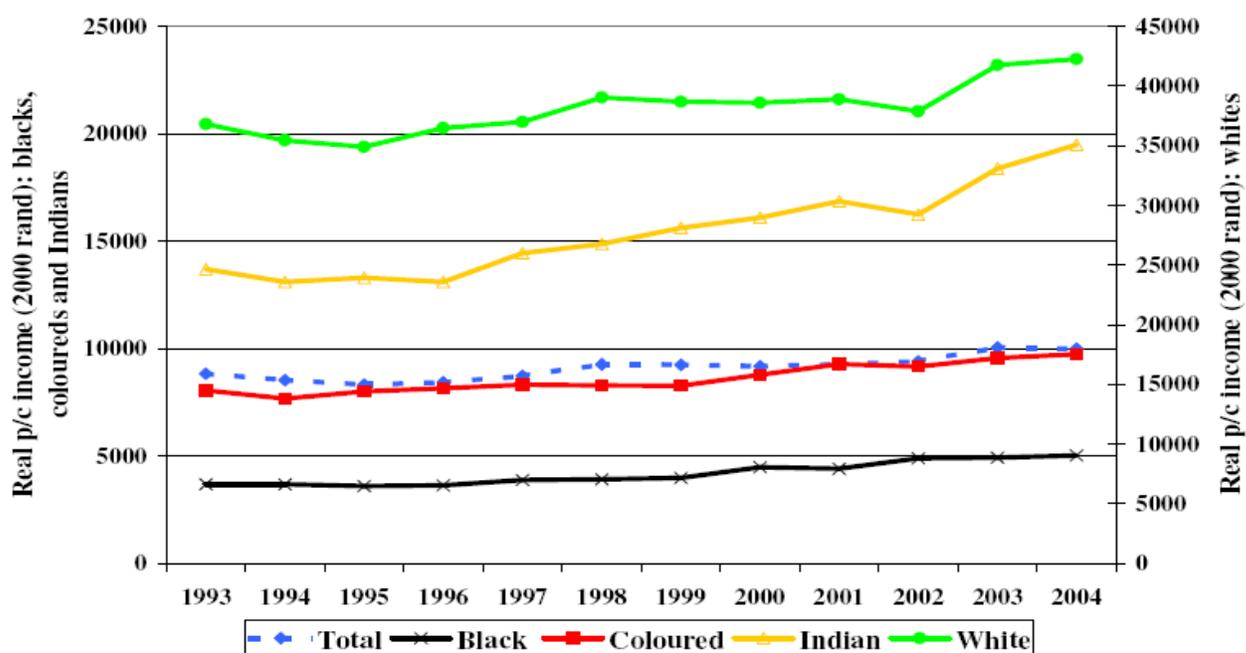
3.2 General Background on Policy Context

At the international and regional level, it is said that 800 million people, one-eighth of humanity, lack the food they need to live healthy, productive lives. It is also said that 170 million children suffer from malnutrition serious enough to jeopardize their chances to become healthy adults. On the regional level, South Africa is working in partnership with SADC to address issues of acute food insecurity and hunger in the region. It is estimated that in Zimbabwe alone, 7 million people are severely food insecure. Since agriculture has been identified as the vehicle for sustainable economic growth and for addressing MDG's in African governments (Hendricks and Lyne, 2009:1), increasing domestic production is the one strategy that needs to be employed (HSRC, 2004).

Post-apartheid transformation seems to have failed in breaking the old patterns of gross inequalities caused by the previous regime that affected a substantial percentage of South African citizens. According to the National Report on Social Development (2000), the distribution of wealth between rich and poor remains extremely uneven. South Africa has had one of the greatest income disparities in the world with a gini co-efficient of 0.58. The poorest 40% of households received only 1% of the total income, while the richest 10% of households received over 40% of the total income. Based on the following table, the conclusion that one can draw is that while the economic position of white people has improved since 1993, the majority of the population has gone deeper into poverty than before. It is worrying that the gap between rich and poor has remained relatively constant over the last three decades despite significant increases in wealth for a small but prominent number of African, coloured and Indian people.

In 1994 when the government of national unity came into office, it inherited a country of gross inequities. While significant progress has been made in education, health care, housing and providing basic services, issues such as food insecurity, unemployment and income disparities continue to be prevalent. Former state president Thabo Mbeki concluded that “it will always be impossible for us to say that we have fully restored the dignity of all our people as long as the overwhelming majority of our people suffer under the burden of poverty and deprivation” (NSDP, 2006). According to the National Report on Social Development (2000), 61% of black South Africans are poor, compared to just 1% of white South Africans. The following table shows the trends in per capita income in South Africa since the dawn of democracy.

Figure 3.1: Trends in per capita income from 1993 to 2004.



Source: Van der Berg et al (2006).

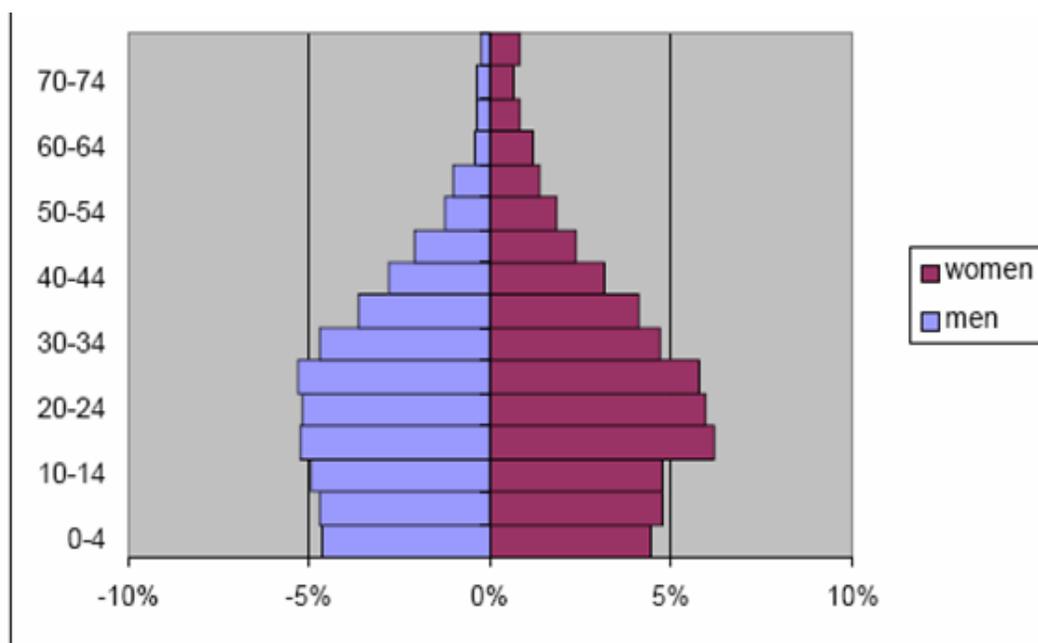
Declining incomes and investments, rising unemployment and enormous social, political and economic inequalities continue to pose serious challenges to the

transition process. The plight that people in the Msunduzi Municipality are facing compels agreement with Raymond Aron, as cited by Ramphela (2008:24), who concluded that “the existence of too great a degree of inequality makes human community impossible.”

3.3 Population Dynamics in KwaZulu-Natal

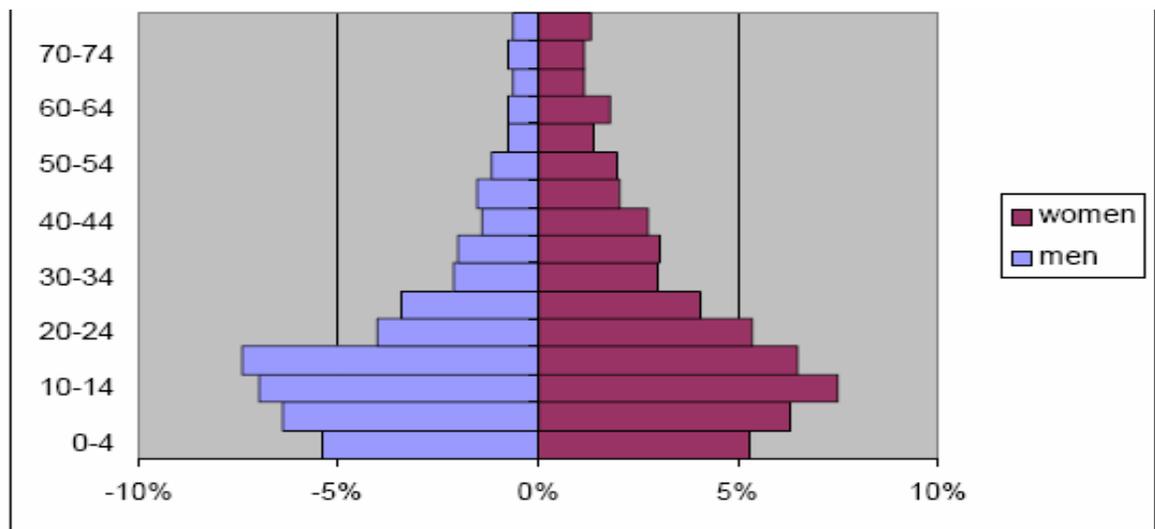
KwaZulu-Natal is experiencing a high level of migration and movement of people between urban and rural areas. In the graph below, Kruger (2007) illustrated how the population differs in urban and rural environments. Rukuni (2011:211) sees this movement of people from rural to urban areas as unfortunate and premature because most of these people are jobless and have no homes in the urban-industrial sector. As indicated above, one of the issues that affect food security is the population movements with respect to capital economy pursuits. In figure 3.3 below, Kruger illustrates this point by projecting rural and urban dynamics in 2007.

Figure 3.2 Population pyramid for urban Kwazulu-Natal



Source: Kruger (2007)

Figure 3.3 : Population Pyramid for Rural KwaZulu Natal



Source: Kruger (2007)

The graphs show that there is a great deal of movement of people between urban and rural environments. The graphs also illustrate how the population differs in urban and rural environments. A number of people have moved from the rural areas to urban areas, impacting negatively on the food security status in urban and peri-urban areas since people have had to compete for scarce resources. Young

children remain in rural areas in the care of relatives and friends as a preferred option for many families with rural and urban ties, while young people and those eligible for jobs migrate to the cities. Older men and women who can no longer play an active economic role remain in the rural areas, to support and look after children. Hence the level of poverty and food insecurity remains high in rural areas because the majority of the population is economically inactive (Kruger, 2007).

Another reason for the economic instability in rural areas is the fact that the manufacturing base is weak, and this is due to poorly developed infrastructure. According to the Department of Local Government document on Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Programme (ISRDP) and the Urban Renewal Programme (URP) (2006), local governments have little or no tax base and weak human capacity due to young people migrating to urban and peri-urban areas in search of job opportunities. The document continues to argue that agriculture and other natural resource based activities provide the basis for livelihoods in rural areas. The migration of people from the rural areas and neighbouring countries to the urban areas are now posing challenges such as high unemployment and housing backlogs, with mushrooming informal settlements.

Rukuni argues that most of the people who migrate to urban areas lack the economic skills necessary to be gainfully employed in the urban areas (2011:211). It is evident that even those who possess the necessary economic skills find it difficult to survive in urban areas due to the lack of employment opportunities. This has culminated in an increase in the rate of crime, ill-health and social breakdown of family structures. The mushrooming of informal settlements in urban areas has also been seen as a result of this migration, and has put more pressure on the already overstretched infrastructure.

It is argued that children remain in rural areas in order to receive better care from relatives. Young people between 20 to 49 years of age are those who migrate to

the cities for better jobs; they then remain there for years, irrespective of whether or not they have gainful employment. This robs the rural areas of the young and energetic force that is desperately needed for economic development in these areas (Rukuni, 2011:211). These people consist of men more than women. Older men and women who can no longer play an active role in the economy remain in the rural areas to ensure that their children and grandchildren are taken care of. People who are sick often return to rural areas to be cared for, usually by older people, and to die.

3.4 Food Security Policy Review

According to the review document on the KwaZulu-Natal Growth and Development Strategy of 1996 (2006), the challenges of the province in terms of poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment are indeed not unique. It argues that the rest of the country, and indeed many developing countries in the world, face similar challenges. For this reason, it is vital to consider the international and national policy context when dealing with the issue of food insecurity.

The Millennium Development Goals have shaped the way in which the governments of the world, including South Africa, respond to developmental challenges. Their strategies and interventions are measured against the MDG's. One of these MDG's is to eradicate extreme poverty, hunger and food insecurity. In line with these MDG's, the South African government has set itself a target that by 2014, 30% of white-owned agricultural land will be distributed for sustainable agricultural development (Smith, 2007).

The inequalities that exist in the South African economy have left a legacy of inequitable spatial development. This has had a negative impact on public sector investment as highlighted by the National Spatial Development Perspective

(NSDP). The economic inequalities and poor livelihoods evident in poor communities in rural areas can be partly attributed to their being located far from employment and other opportunities (KwaZulu-Natal Growth and Development Strategy review document, 2006).

Against the background of discussions thus far in the present study, it is evident that South Africa needs policies that not only enhance current livelihood strategies, but it needs policies that will promote improved infrastructure, easy access to assets or capital, increased production and vibrant informal markets, economic growth, poverty reduction and job creation. Hendricks and Lyne (2009) maintain that agricultural growth offers possibilities for reducing food insecurity at all levels of society.

It is apparent that such policies usually focus on treating the symptoms of hunger rather than generating sustainable livelihoods. It is therefore recommended that in order for food security policies to be effective and relevant, they have to support the protection and accumulation of assets, the reduction of production risks, safety nets and public transfers (Kruger, 2007). It needs to be established whether the South African government has been doing this systematically through its policies.

When the new democratic government took over in 1994, the country was facing a variety of serious structural problems. For this reason, the government introduced the basic social development policy framework, known as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). The main aim of this policy was to address needs such as housing, land, health, education and services (RDP White Paper, 1994). The RDP White Paper identified the five key programs that the RDP policy framework would address. These were: meeting basic needs, developing human resources, democratizing the state and society, building the economy and implementing the RDP. It is worrying however that sustainable livelihoods and

redress of access to assets by the majority of South Africans was not one of the key programmes of the RDP. Almost all the key programmes of the RDP do not address food security directly, and this is a serious oversight on the part of the South African government. Although land reform is prioritized, it is a mere redistribution of land that does not put food security at the centre.

Table 3.2 Selected RDP Goals

<p>Housing: Provide well-located and affordable shelter for all by the year 2003. Build one million houses in five years.</p>	<p>Water: Supply 20 to 30 litres of clean water each day to every person in two years and 50 to 60 litres per day within five years from a point no more than 200 meters from their dwelling.</p>
<p>Electricity: Supply 2.5 million more households and all schools and clinics with electricity by the year 2000.</p>	<p>Health care: Give free medical care to children under 6 years and to homeless children; improve maternity care for women; organize programs to prevent and treat major diseases such as TB and AIDS.</p>
<p>Land reform: Implement land reform based on redistribution of residential and productive land to those who need it but cannot afford it, and restitution to those who lost land because of apartheid laws.</p>	<p>Job Creation through public works: A national public works program to provide basic needs such as water supply, sewerage and roads and at the same time create jobs, particularly in poor and rural areas.</p>
<p>Social security and social welfare: A new system to provide for all people regardless of their race, gender or physical disability. A pension system to meet the needs of</p>	<p>Education and training: Literacy for all, equal opportunity, 10 years of free and compulsory education, class sizes of no more than 40 pupils, training workers to meet the</p>

works in the formal and informal sectors.	challenges of the new political and economic conditions.
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Source:Knight (2001).

The RDP policy should be commended for giving rise to increased spending on social programmes in all spheres of government such as school feeding schemes, child support grants, free health services for children between 0-6 years, for pregnant and lactating women, pension funds for the elderly, provincial community food garden initiatives like Kgora and Xoshindlala, land reform and farmer settlement, production loans scheme for small farmers, infrastructure grant for smallholder farmers and the Presidential tractor mechanisation scheme (Department of Agriculture, 2002).

The policy is criticised however for not prioritising job creation. As a result of this oversight, levels of unemployment in South Africa remain alarmingly high. Critics attribute the failures of this policy to its strong emphasis on developmental activity, redistribution and the regulation of the economy to protect the working poor. They maintain that the policy failed to highlight the importance of investment driven job-creating growth (Democratic Alliance, 2007). It is evident that the macroeconomic policy known as the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Microeconomic Strategy (GEAR) is in direct conflict with the goals of the RDP, which is the reduction of poverty and a more equal division of wealth. GEAR, on the other hand, promotes privatization and accumulation of wealth by a few people who happen to have the right assets and financial capabilities.

As it was articulated previously, food security and job creation remain key goals of economic policy in South Africa. The government has argued that GEAR and privatization are the best long-term means to achieve this growth. However, one could argue that it contradicts the goals of the RDP, which aims to enable all the

citizens of the country to participate equally in the economy. GEAR has led to the country being divided into two different economies, with the vast majority of the poor being black people. The economic growth is not sufficient to provide access to adequate food and to reduce unemployment. Millions of black South Africans still need access to adequate food and housing, basic services and land (Knight, 2001).

The Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative (ASGISA) was introduced in February 2006 by the government of South Africa. According to the KwaZulu-Natal Growth and Development Strategy (2006), the overall goal of this initiative was to halve poverty and unemployment by 2014. It aimed to place the South African economy on a permanently higher growth path of more than 4.5% in the period from 2006 to 2009, and more than 6% from 2010 to 2014.

One of the key goals of ASGISA was to eliminate the second economy. ASGISA builds on the principles underpinning the Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF), which guides the national, provincial and local planning and budgeting processes over the medium term. ASGISA identifies binding constraints or bottlenecks to higher economic growth rates which it then intends to remove through a set of strategic interventions. It is sad to note however that not much has been done since the introduction of ASGISA in terms of narrowing the gap between the first and the second economy.

Many people in previously disadvantaged villages are still facing severe poverty and food insecurity. The aim of ASGISA was to address scarce and critical skills needed in the formal economy for productivity and employment growth. It aimed to promote skills development for employability and sustainable livelihoods through social development initiatives. It seems that the policy had very good intentions in terms of improving food security, but its implementation leaves much to be desired,

since many people in the country, some of whom are graduates, remain unemployed.

The Xoshindlala campaign, which means “chase away hunger”, was introduced by the KZN government in March 2000 in a bid to fight food insecurity. In terms of this campaign, households are given a box that contains a package of basic production inputs such as seeds, some fertilizer and instructions for illiterate users. While it can hardly be disputed that the Xoshindlala campaign, and many other flagship programmes implemented by the KZN government, had good intentions, it is very difficult to pinpoint successful projects that were implemented as a result of it. The implementation of the programmes did not follow some of the basic principles of community development. It would have been more beneficial if poor people in the community were approached and their needs ascertained and ‘projects’ appropriate to their needs were identified. The one thing that many government departments and NGOs seem to forget is that community projects do not belong to them. The community must be allowed to take ownership of the project.

A New Growth Path Framework was adopted in the same year by the ANC-led government, to guide government’s work in creating jobs. This framework was adopted in order to achieve economic growth, and to fight unemployment and food insecurity by targeting to create five million jobs over the next ten years (LGC Media, 2011). The key tenet of this policy is that it seeks to restructure the South African economy to improve its performance in terms of labour absorption, as well as the composition and rate of growth. It remains to be seen whether the government will have the capacity to manage the proposed structural changes in the economy without further marginalizing the poor people. In the past we have seen affluent sectors of the population benefiting, mainly because of their connections to people with power and influence (Ramphela, 2008:245).

Wealth accumulation in South Africa was attained “largely on the backs of black people”. Ramphela believes that we cannot have a sustainable country when only white people are well-off. It therefore becomes necessary to have an economic policy such as the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) that seeks to democratise wealth creation. It is consistent with Ramphela’s assertion that “Political power without economic power is unsustainable” (2008:245).

BEE focuses on the transfer of assets to black-owned enterprises and provides for preferential procurement. Some critics blame BEE for the spawning of front companies, which happens when white-owned companies use black people’s names without them having either say or direct profit from the company. Ramphela believes that fronting is “another form of corruption that has spread like cancer” (2008:245). The policy framework only benefits a small group of investors and therefore does not empower all historically disadvantaged people, since it ignores the plight of most black people who, even today, continue to live under situations where they are faced with unemployment and despair.

The three policies discussed above focus on accelerating development, economic growth and job creation. None of them is geared towards enabling poor people to access resources and assets that would lead to food security and sustainable livelihoods.

3.5 Policies on Rural Development

Subsistence farming in rural areas continues to be a valuable practice, since it offers opportunities for income generation through processing and sale of food garden produce. The Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) hinges on the premise that it is possible for rural dwellers to attain sustainable livelihoods if their conditions are conducive for increased agricultural production.

The CRDP is aimed at being an effective response against food insecurity. It seeks to maximise the use and management of natural resources by reviving land reform

projects and irrigation schemes to create sustainable and vibrant rural communities. It is hoped that the CRDP will not only improve the standards of living in rural communities, but it will also rectify past injustices “through rights-based interventions and address skewed patterns of distribution and ownership of wealth and assets” (LGC Media, 2011).

The main strategic objective of the CRDP is to facilitate integrated rural development and social cohesion in partnership with all sectors of society. One can only hope that this programme will not only enable rural communities to participate in decision making, it will also facilitate the identification of viable opportunities, including smallholder schemes that can improve sustainable livelihoods on a much larger scale. The vision of the CRDP includes the following:¹¹

- Improving food security of the rural poor.
- Contributing to the redistribution of 30% of the country’s agricultural land.
- Creation of business opportunities, decongesting and rehabilitation of overcrowded former homeland areas.
- Expanding opportunities for women, youth and people with disabilities and older persons.

In terms of the South African Local Government Journal (2011),¹² this vision will be achieved through a threefold strategy based on the following:

- A coordinated and integrated broad based rural agricultural transformation.
- Strategically increasing rural development.
- An improved land reform programme.

¹¹ The information was obtained from the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (www.ruraldevelopment.gov.za –accessed on 25 August 2011) and the South African Local Government Journal (2011).

¹² Published by LGC Media

In line with the objectives of the CRDP, the One-Home- One- Garden campaign was launched in KwaZulu-Natal in 2009. The campaign is aimed at encouraging people to commence their homestead-based gardening activities. The government provides seed and fertilizer packages to people so that they can sustain their food gardens. Mechanization is provided to deserving cooperatives to ensure that land is cultivated and to assist women and their children to produce more food for their families and communities (Mthembu, 2009).

It is not clear however how the implementation of the strategy is going to be monitored. This has left many rural households dissatisfied about the manner in which the programme is being implemented. According to some people who reside in the Vulindlela area, the programme is characterised by corruption and mismanagement. They say that only certain people in the community can obtain the seeds that the department supplies as part of its One-Home-One-Garden Campaign, depending on their political connections. There is also a lack of monitoring and evaluation on the part of the department. No attempt is made to ensure that the seeds supplied by the department reach the right people who actually use them. Another problem is the livestock damage, especially in rural areas, where individual households find it difficult to locate funds to fence their food gardens.

The Extended Public Works Programme must also be considered when discussing issues of rural development. The programme is a mechanism created to cope with the need for the labour force to be employed and acquire skills, and enable access to money; it is not really about food security and sustainable livelihoods. Exploring it will shed light on the contribution it may have made in food security. The programme aims to confront the challenges of food insecurity in the country through the provision of skills and income opportunities. The Department of Labour

(DOL) and the Skills Education and Training Authorities (SETA) coordinate the training and skills development aspect (HSRC,2009).

The EPWP involves creating temporary work opportunities for the unemployed coupled with training, using public sector expenditure. It builds on existing best-practice government infrastructure and social programmes either by deepening their labour absorption or extending them. President Thabo Mbeki officially announced the programme in his State of the Nation Address in February 2003.

The aim of the EPWP is to create 4.5 million work opportunities. The programme is seen as a key element of Government's comprehensive approach to ensure that the poor can participate and benefit from a growing economy, mainly through the creation of jobs coupled with training for future employment, given that most of the unemployed are unskilled (LGC, 2011).

The emphasis is on relatively unskilled work opportunities. All of the work opportunities generated by the EPWP are therefore combined with training, education or skills development, with the aim of increasing the ability of people to earn an income once they leave the programme. However the programme can be criticised for providing short-term and unsustainable job opportunities. The programme focuses on the provision of access to income, and it does not directly address food security. On average, the jobs provided by the programme last for three months. The big question that needs to be asked is what happens to the people who have been benefiting from the programme when the opportunity suddenly comes to an end? What happens to their livelihoods? These are the issues that the programme needs to address going forward.

It is undeniable that the high levels of food insecurity in South Africa have adversely impacted poor communities, especially in rural areas, where employment opportunities are scarce. It was for this reason that the special

projects unit of the EPWP, in partnership with the President's Second Economy Strategy, took a decision to introduce the Community Work Programme (CWP), which is aimed at creating employment opportunities for youth in identified poverty nodes across the country.

The CWP was initiated by the South African Presidency and located in the Trade and Industrial Strategy Projects (TIPS), as a national pilot project in late 2007. Teba Development was appointed in November 2007 to implement the CWP as a pilot project in the Eastern Cape. LIMA was then appointed by Teba Development as the implementing partner. The programme has since expanded into 10 municipalities across the country, which includes the Msunduzi Municipality.

The programme provides job opportunities for youth in agriculture, construction, education and home-based care. It provides the youth who are participating in it with useful skills in economic development and it gives them work experience. It is important to note however that job opportunities do not automatically provide shelter to agriculture for sustainable control and growth of food security. The programme also provides community mobilization, infrastructural development, food security and social support (www.lima.org.za-accessed on 23 August 2011).

There have been complaints from communities that the programme is not available in some wards, and that favouritism was used in the selection of the youth who are participating in the programme. It is very difficult to separate the programme from the EPWP, since it also provides short-term jobs. It does not provide infrastructural development and community mobilization. Given the rate of unemployment in the municipality amongst the youth, the contribution made by the programme can be seen as a drop in the ocean. It does not offer a solid and sustainable solution to the issue of youth unemployment.

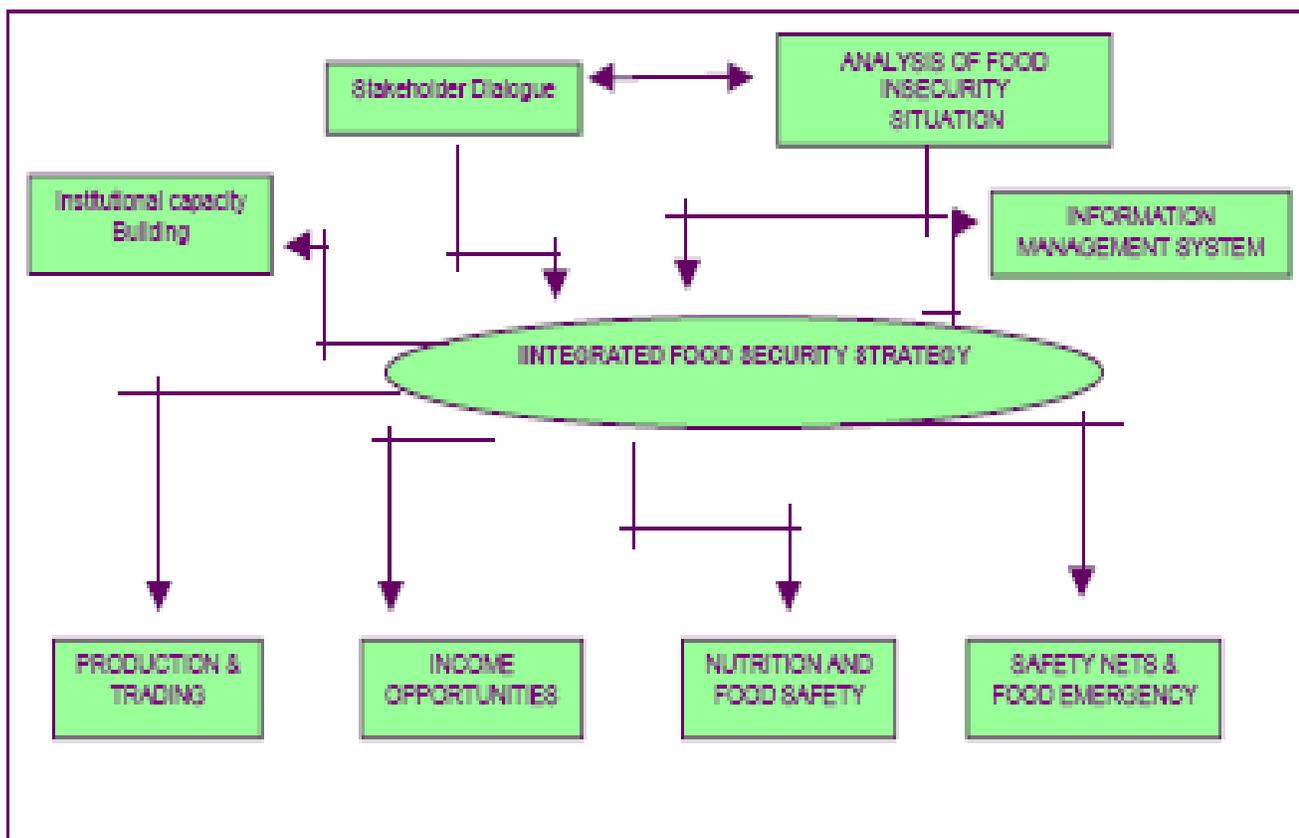
3.6 The Integrated Food Security Strategy

It seemed that the food security programmes and policies that were implemented between 1994 and 2002 by different government departments in all spheres were not generating the expected results, at least not at the anticipated rate. Hence the government deemed it necessary to improve the unsatisfactory situation that was occasioned by the implementation of these programmes, by formulating a national food security strategy that would “streamline, harmonize and integrate the diverse food security programmes” into the Integrated Food Security Strategy (Department of Agriculture, 2002). The strategy was introduced in 2002, and its goal was to eradicate poverty and food insecurity by 2015. The strategy intends to achieve this by facilitating access to adequate, affordable, safe and nutritious food by all South African at all times to meet their dietary and food preferences for an active and healthy life. The primary objectives can be summed up as follows:

- To provide increased household food production and trading.
- To improve income generation and job creation opportunities.
- To improve nutrition and food safety.
- To increase safety nets and food emergency management systems
- To improve analysis and information management system;
- To provide capacity building;
- To hold stakeholder dialogue

In terms of the following diagram, the process of institutional arrangements and stakeholder dialogue ensures that the programmes are implemented to realize the objective of eradicating poverty and food insecurity.

Figure 3.4 Processes of institutional arrangements and stakeholder dialogue



Source: EU Food Aid and Food Security Programme, Brussels (1999:32-33).

The IFSS proposes that the programme lead departments be as follows:

- Special Programme for Food Security such as food gardens - Department of

- Community Development Programme such as the EPWP - Department of Public Works.
- Integrated Nutrition and Food Safety Programme - Department of Health.
- Comprehensive Social Security Programme - Department of Social Development.
- Information and Communication Programme - Statistics South Africa.
- Food Security Capacity Building Programme - all departments.
- Food Security Stakeholder Dialogue Programme - All departments.

The intention was to integrate the IFSS into other food security programmes such as the RDP, which followed the first democratic elections in 1994. This policy saw increased spending in government social programmes such as school feeding schemes, child support grants, community public works programmes, free health services for children between 0-6 years, for pregnant and lactating women, pension funds for the elderly, production loans support scheme for small farmers, infrastructure grant for smallholder farmers and the Presidential tractor mechanisation scheme (Department of Agriculture, 2002). Again the problem with these social programmes is that they lack monitoring and evaluation, resulting in a great deal of corruption. Some of these programmes, such as the feeding scheme and the mechanization programme, have been put on hold in some parts of the country due to issues of overspending.

The strategy remains shallow and incomprehensive due to blurred institutional arrangements. There are three factors that have made it difficult for the strategy to achieve its goals. The first is that there seems to be no government department that has been assigned responsibility for addressing food security in a comprehensive fashion. Although the department of Agriculture is seen as a lead department in terms of coordinating food security programmes inside government, the programmes of the department focus on rural food security to the detriment of

a holistic view. It does not address urban and peri-urban poverty. Instead, it “focuses on a prosperous agricultural sector rather than assuring food security for all” (Crush and Fyne, 2010:18). That way, it does not assure “food security for all” including the urban population. The coordination of a food security response was tasked to a Food Security Directorate within the Department of Agriculture. This directorate lacks political will, administrative power and adequate capacity to implement the strategy. The directorate lacks administrative power and political will to drive the process.

3.7 The National Integrated Nutrition Programme

Despite various national nutrition and primary health care programmes being initiated in South Africa over the last decade, the levels of malnutrition remain frighteningly high in South Africa. According to the Input paper for Health Roadmap (2008), stunting and being underweight continue to be the most common nutritional disorders, affecting 1 out of 5 children and almost 1 out of 10 children respectively. The paper continues to argue that almost one third of women and children are anaemic, 2 out of 3 children and 1 out of 4 women had a poor vitamin A status and 45.3% of children had an inadequate zinc status.

It was for this reason that the government decided to introduce the Integrated Nutrition Programme (INP). According to Saitowitz et al (1996), the INP is different from past nutrition programmes in that it emphasizes the need to address all the causes of malnutrition and stresses that in order to achieve this, all sectors need to work in an integrated manner. This programme targets nutritionally vulnerable households and communities, individuals with children less than 5 years of age, pregnant women, persons suffering from lifestyle-related and chronic diseases such as High Blood Pressure and HIV/AIDS, and other people who are deemed to be at high risk .

One of the main aims of the programme was to enable all women to breastfeed their children exclusively until six months of age and thereafter to continue breastfeeding in addition to the introduction of appropriate complementary foods, until twenty-four months of age and beyond. However this does not sound feasible given the fact that many mothers in South Africa are forced to go and work far away from home because of limited employment opportunities, hence they leave their children with other caregivers. The mushrooming of labour brokers makes it difficult for many mothers who are employed through brokers to enjoy the basic benefits such as maternity leave. Even those who do get leave are not eager to take it since they fear what might happen to their jobs afterwards. Another hindering factor is teenage pregnancy. Young mothers usually go back to school or universities to further their education, thus leaving their children with other family members. The six month period for exclusive breastfeeding is therefore not feasible.

3.8 Food Security and the Social Security System

When the new democratic government of South Africa came into power, it inherited a disorderly social security system which was geared towards protecting white people by way of social insurance or social assistance. The Children's Protection Act and the Workmen's Compensation Act were passed in 1913 and 1914 respectively. In terms of these acts, parents could claim maintenance grants and workers could claim support in cases of accidents or illness. However, Borat maintains that very few of these grants were extended to black African children, especially those living in rural areas (1995:595).

In 1928 the government introduced the Old Age Pensions Act. This act provided grants for coloured and white people only. The system excluded the black people because the government of the time believed that rural kinship was able to adequately provide security to its own people, which, unfortunately, was hardly the

case (Bhorat, 1995:596). Old age pensions and disability grants were extended to Indian and black people in 1944 and 1947 respectively, but this process was characterised by favouritism, racism and inequality, in that the amount paid as social grants was not the same across all races. Hence Bhorat pointed out that “the maximum pension for whites was five times that of Africans. Coloured and Indian pensioners were paid half as much as whites” (Bhorat, 1995:597).

The Pension Funds Act of 1956 was also implemented in a way that was based on race. According to Van der Berg (1997) as cited by Haarmann (2000), in the 1960s and early 1970s coverage was extended to black workers, although the majority of the black labour force, who were either unemployed or in jobs not covered by social retirement insurance, remained outside the security net, and “until the 1970’s, the UIF usually did not cover black workers.”

The new government was therefore faced with the assignment of developing a method and approach that could transform the welfare system, which was characterised by decreasing per capita income, low levels of economic growth, increasing food insecurity and poverty levels and pressure on the system to meet basic human needs. There was extreme inequality in the distribution of resources among racial groups and households, where 40% of poor South African households earned less than 6% of total national income (UNISA: 2010:194).

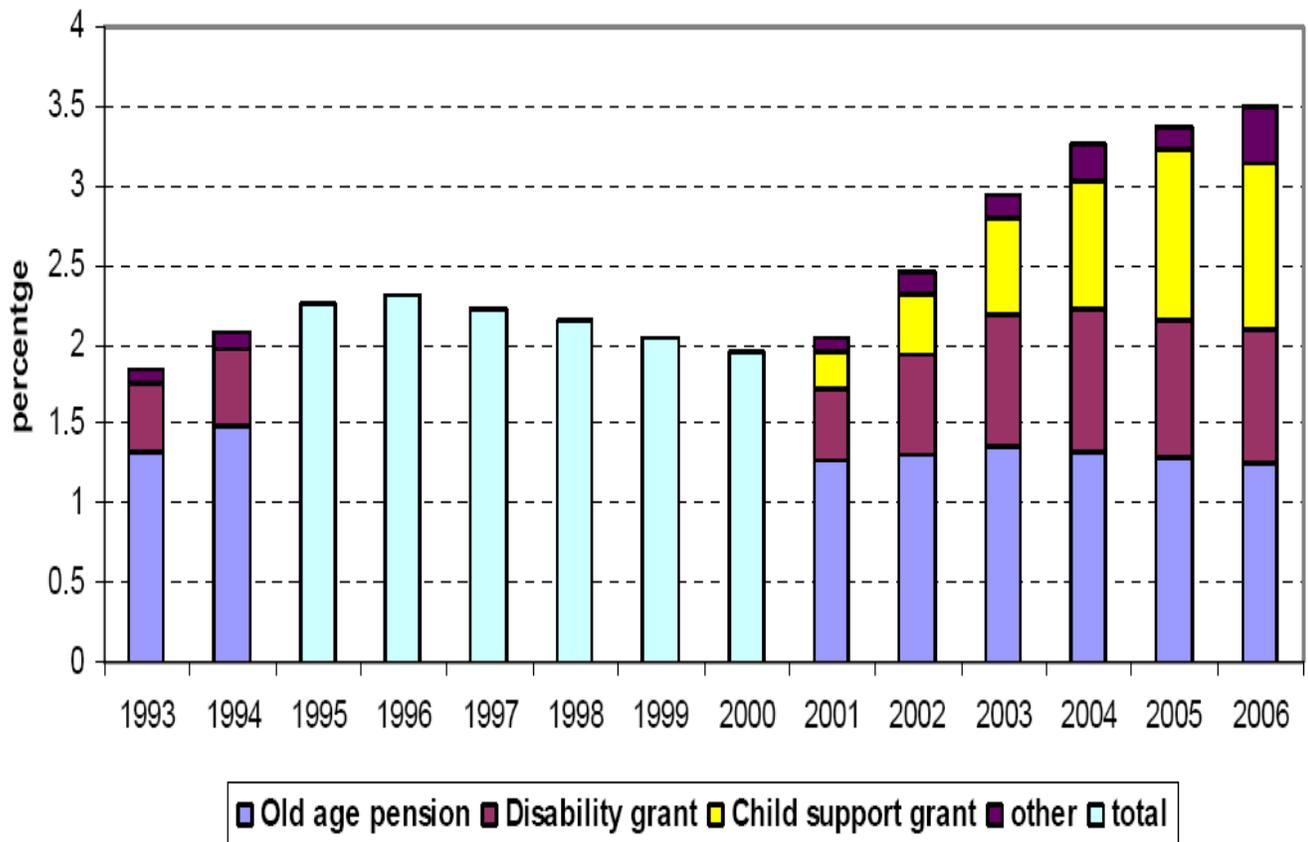
To respond to this challenge, the South African government introduced the White Paper on Social Welfare in 1997, which was aimed at facilitating the “provision of appropriate developmental social welfare services to all South Africans, especially those living in poverty, those who are vulnerable and those who have special needs. These services should include rehabilitative, preventative, developmental and protective services and facilities, as well as social security, including social relief programmes, social care programmes and the enhancement of social functioning.” (White Paper, 1997:15)

The introduction of the Child Support Grants (CSG) has been one of the major products of the White Paper on Social Welfare. The CSG replaced the Single Mothers Grant (SMG), which was promulgated by the apartheid regime to provide financial support to single parents.

The goal of the Department of Social Welfare when CSG was introduced was to reach 3 million children within the next five years. The Department introduced a means-test for the selection of eligible children and their care-givers. The social relief grant was also introduced as a measure “for bridging a temporary situation of crisis for an individual or a family with no other support or insurance” (Haarmann: 2000).

The government of South Africa has substantially increased its total expenditure on social assistance and reached many more poor people. Expenditure on social assistance almost doubled in percentage terms from about 2% of GDP in 1994 to about 3.5% in 2006. However the existing system of social security does not seem to be able to cover all vulnerable groups. These include the unemployed and the underemployed, children who have aged out of foster care and many other vulnerable individuals.

Figure 3.5- Social Security at National Level Since 1993



Source: Friedman & Bhengu, 2008.

Again, issues of accessibility to these social grants and the elimination of corruption need to be prioritised. There are many children, especially in rural areas, who do not receive these grants even though they qualify for them. The research done by USAID in three municipalities of KZN (Taylor, 2010:5) stipulates that supporting documentation may be a key barrier to social grants access.

The social relief of distress grant is payable for only up to six months in situations such as a period after a disaster, a temporary disability, a sudden death in the family or a waiting period for another social grant. However, the award of this grant is discretionary and not guaranteed. The sustainability of such a grant is highly questionable since the government does not have enough funds available. Many potential beneficiaries have, on several occasions, been turned away from DSD offices due to the funds having dried up.

3.9 The War on Poverty

In August 2008, the ANC government launched the War on Poverty Campaign to try to reduce poverty in the country. The most disadvantaged households are identified and visited periodically by a team of professionals from different departments to assess their needs and to fast-track access to government services. War rooms were established that were inclusive of all government departments and other stakeholders to bring about maximum impact in identified households.

According to the War on Poverty framework implementation plan (2008), some of the things that were taken into account when devising the project were to facilitate provision of on-going programmes that include, among other things, improving access to social grants, the EPWP, food gardens, free basic services, micro-credit and business support to SMME's, skills development, and other initiatives intended to deal with the Second Economy communities.

The War on Poverty framework for implementation plan (2008) summarises the project as follows:

Table 3.3 – War on Poverty Framework

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	
<p>Project 8: War against Poverty Description: <i>Medium-term objective:</i> development of comprehensive anti-poverty strategy and its implementation plan, including broad societal consultations and agreement on issues such as poverty datum line. <i>Interim campaign:</i> utilising CDWs, social workers, community- and home-based care workers, constituency offices, councillors and NGOs identify households and individuals in dire poverty and provide one or combination of interventions already available – social grants, ‘distress grant’, food parcels, school feeding, agricultural starter-packs, micro-finance and SMME assistance, enrolment into EPWP etc.</p>	<p>Organisational Implications: War Room for War against Poverty: dsd working with dplg (and provinces/municipalities), health, dpsa, agriculture, land affairs, dpw, national treasury and StatsSA to set up a project team, prepare template for assessment of households, divide the country into manageable spaces, co-ordinate teams, process submissions and decide on interventions, and mobilise business and others to contribute for e.g. c/o NGOs.</p> <p>Cluster Responsibility: Social Cluster</p>

Source: War on Poverty framework for implementation plan (2008).

In its annual report, the Department of Social Development contributed R3.3 million towards the establishment of a national food bank network in South Africa. By the end of December 2009, the banks had provided 1 899 625 monthly meals to very poor households via 974 food agencies nationwide, with an aim of addressing food insecurity and developing viable agribusinesses (Annual Report

,31 March 2010). One wonders whether the project will really be able to make a difference in terms of eradicating poverty and food insecurity and providing sustainable livelihoods, since, although viable, it appears to be fixated on immediate and short term relief of distress, thus running the risk of promoting the dependency syndrome.

3.10 Community Gardens Policy

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture, (1999) policy on community gardens defines a community garden as an area of land to be utilised by a group of committed and dedicated people to produce fruit and vegetables. This land may be within the jurisdiction of a tribal authority or local government authority. The land may be state or private land which is managed communally.

Community garden projects are the results of policy changes aimed at focusing the work of the department on achieving its aims. Community gardens help the department to assist people to reduce poverty and to achieve household food security and develop skills. Community gardens are registered as projects with the Department of Agriculture.

The minimum number of people participating in a community garden has been set at five people. The minimum size of a garden is 2500 square metres. The garden is managed by a committee who would have a constitution and a bank account, and further to these, would have a recognised agreement or arrangement which would grant them security of tenure to the land for a minimum period of five years.

The department assists new gardens to "start up" by supplying financial assistance on a "once-off" basis. They are expected to be financially self-sufficient thereafter. Ongoing technical assistance is provided. While many community gardens have already been developed, there is considerable scope and need for further gardens to be developed. Strategies and procedures need to be put in place to ensure that

new gardens are developed and that they will be successful by using both natural and human resources optimally and sustainably.

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture, (1999) pronounced the objectives of the policy as follows:

- To improve the diet of rural people by making a variety of fruit and vegetables available within communities and to bring about household food security.
- To enable people to grow their own fruit and vegetables instead of buying
- To help people acquire the knowledge and skills to do this
- To provide a focus for work within the community
- To teach members of community garden projects the business skills required to successfully run community gardens.

The Department committed itself to assist community garden projects with basic necessary resources on a once-off basis. These resources include, among other things, provision of fencing material as per the departmental fencing specifications, irrigation, ploughing, liming and constructing conservation structures. A maximum amount of R10.000 per hectare of community garden may be spent on the preparation, irrigation and liming. This includes the initial ploughing, taking of soil samples and building basic soil fertility. Part of this money may be used to build weirs.

A permanent source of water must be available for the garden. A minimum water supply of 20 litres per square metre per week is required. Community gardens shall not be sited closer than 10 metres to the ten year flood line of a stream or river. Indigenous vegetation on stream banks shall not be disturbed.

Departmental pumps which are installed at existing gardens will no longer be the responsibility of the Department. Treasury approval shall be obtained to transfer

such pumps to the community garden concerned. The garden committee shall make its own arrangements for future maintenance and repairs to the pumps. Departmental officials shall supply continuous technical advice and assistance and shall advise on the marketing and preparation of produce.

3.11 Institutional Support and Food Insecurity

According to Kranz (2001:6), economic growth at both national and local level is essential for food insecurity reduction, but he also stresses that there is no automatic relationship between the two since it all depends on the capabilities of poor and vulnerable households to take advantage of expanding economic opportunities.

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework emphasises the importance of social capital in the fight against food insecurity (Neefjes 2000:103). Social capital refers to the inclusion in social networks within which reciprocal relationships of mutual trust exist, and where mutual understandings exist. Deolalikar et al (2002) stipulate that in addition to the family and the community, the key requirement for food insecurity and poverty reduction is political will and commitment on the part of the government. These authors see government as the key actor with whom other groups, such as civil society and international organizations, can cooperate in the fight against food insecurity, resource unavailability and poverty. People's livelihoods can benefit from having access to assets held in common such as access to public goods and services (Collective Action and Property Rights (CAPRI), June 2008).

Government and civil society form an important part of social capital. Civil society consists of both formal and informal organizations that operate outside of the state to promote various interests in society. These institutions include, among others, NGOs, community based organizations, faith-based organizations, labour unions, media, business sector and educational institutions, and development workers who

have been instrumental in strengthening the capacities of people made vulnerable by food insecurity. According to Deolalikar et al (2002), good governance is crucial and it includes transparency and accountability in public decision-making. Good governance also includes significant participation of citizens and civil society in administrative decision-making, including policy-making.

Deolalikar et al (2002) pointed out that the role of development institutions includes socio-economic empowerment of people through holistic and multi-sectoral interventions, e.g., skills training in crop production, and advocacy. It is important to note however that despite the productive efforts by NGOs in supporting people's development and sustainable livelihoods, some kind of workable relationship is needed with the state since they are the custodians of development, and they control most of the public assets which can be utilised for poor people's livelihoods.

Deolalikar et al (2002) argue that effective institutional support is not only important in accelerating poverty and food insecurity reduction, they are also important as they allow the poor to take advantage of the opportunities created by economic growth. These authors maintain that in many countries poor people have less physical and economic access to education and health services than the non-poor. This has resulted in lower rates of utilization of such services and worse health and literacy outcomes have been evident. Hence there is a "vicious circle of poverty leading to ill health, malnutrition, and illiteracy." Although many publicly provided services in South Africa, such as health care and schooling, are supposedly available free of charge to the poor who meet the criteria, the fact is that these services are rarely obtained without some form of payment, since people still have to travel long distances due to the remoteness of most social services.

3.13.1 Factors Influencing successful Implementation of Food Security Programmes

Change is introduced from outside the community, it may encounter some form of resistance since people have been given many promises that were never kept. Involvement of the community in food garden projects does not only break down resistance to project activities, especially if the project is facilitated by agencies outside the community, but it also expands their knowledge and their interest, thus providing a favourable environment for sustainability.

The community should be actively involved and take ownership of the projects, and their own efforts to find solutions should be supported (Faber et al, 2006:16). In order to ensure sustainability of food garden projects, it is important for development agents to follow the right steps when thinking of starting such projects. Constraints such as the availability of resources in the community and seasonal limitations should be taken into consideration.

Rogers, as cited by Louw (2002), maintains that attempts to introduce solutions to the community by means of ready-made institutions and programmes which are planned, developed, financed and managed by agencies or persons outside the community, are unlikely to succeed in the future. Rogers continues to say that such interventions are “psychologically unsound” because they place the owners of the community in an inferior position and this implies negative perceptions with regard to their capabilities and interest in their own development.

Programme and policy prescriptions are very dangerous as they discourage social self-help on a cooperative basis, and neglect the talents, energies and other human resources of the people themselves. Individual households in communities have an enormous potential for growth and development under facilitative and conducive environments, hence a two-way communication channel between the

community and the facilitators will speed up community development and empowerment (Louw, 2002:22).

Dialogue and community participation ensures that solutions are not just accepted, but are questioned, challenged and analysed. Regular community meetings provide good opportunities for people to participate in their own development. During these meetings, consensus on project planning and modifications can be obtained. According to Faber et al (2006:16), such opportunities ensure transparency in the managerial and planning processes and contribute towards increased social sustainability of the projects. On the other hand, economic sustainability depends on other factors that may include, but are not limited to, participation. These factors include assets, labour and infrastructure.

Faber et al concludes that insufficient training can adversely affect progress and effectiveness of food garden projects. They maintain that it is important for those involved in food gardens at community level to be trained appropriately as this has serious implications for both efficiency and sustainability. They also believe that building on existing infrastructure and integrating aspects of the food garden approach with other development programmes is likely to enhance sustainability and cost-effectiveness. It is therefore important to understand the local gardening activities and constraints, and to adapt the project activities accordingly.

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework focuses on natural resources, which includes the use of land for food security projects. Most food security projects in Vulindlela, such as the mushroom farming project, can only assist a few people because it requires specialised skills. The government introduced the mushroom project because it felt that it was a viable and quick solution to poverty and food insecurity, since mushrooms do not require too much input and they grow quickly. Community and household gardens, on the other hand, have proven to be the only

economic activity that anybody can access since it primarily requires indigenous knowledge and is well supported by agricultural agencies.

This leads us to the conclusion that natural resources such as land, if utilised properly, can provide good alternative sources of food security. Studies have shown that many community-based natural resource initiatives have been successful. Harris et al (2001:322) stipulates that the goal of rural households is not conservation but rather sustainable use of natural resources to satisfy social and economic needs. Harris et al (2001:323) argue that security of land tenure can also contribute considerably to sound natural resource management. When people have secure access to land and other resources, they make long term investments that promote sustainable livelihoods.

It is these groups that contribute to interdependent socioeconomic activities, shared interests and mutual perceptions (Harris et al, 2001:324). This study intended to explore the fruits and end results of community-based natural resource management systems and food security initiatives, with specific focus on food gardens. It also intended to explore the extent to which such initiatives are able to reduce the vulnerability context as stipulated by the sustainable livelihood framework.

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework also encourages investment in human capital, and it sees such an investment as an important key to break the poverty cycle and to overcome food insecurity. Amartya Sen also interpreted poverty in terms of capability deprivation, and this has brought the role played by education in fighting food insecurity and poverty into sharper focus. In the past, black people in South Africa were given inferior education during the apartheid government. Most of them did not get the chance to attend school since they were forced to drop out of school to look after the livestock owned by white people. It is noticeable that today the government of South Africa has done a great deal to improve the education system of this country.

This calls for improvement in the level of efficiency in the South African education system. This ineffective education system is somewhat related to food security at both the micro and macro levels. At the micro level, illiterate individuals are less productive, usually trapped in low-paying occupations and remain at very low levels of living. At the macro level, nations with illiterate or less-educated citizens cannot progress well, as the country cannot increase its outputs substantially; as a result people endure a low standard of living (UNESCO, 2003).

There is a need for more community needs-oriented interventions that will directly respond to the food security problem that people in rural areas such as Vulindlela are facing. Such interventions need to be community driven and must take into account the feelings and views of the community. Swanepoel (1997:15) stipulates that community development is never a large scale national strategy, but it consists of activities at grassroots level. While this statement is true to a limited extent, it needs to be noted that some issues of assets and resources that affect communities at grassroots level need to be tackled at the national level, where policies are made. However, to agree with Swanepoel, it is true that community development initiatives and actions should take into account respect for and recognition of local and indigenous knowledge and perceptions, and their use. This implies that the community's self-identity, its values and traditions should be taken into account at all times (du Toit et al, 2001:97).

3.13.2 Local Government

Local government is a crucial part of the reconstruction and development effort in South Africa. According to the Local Government Turnaround Strategy (2009), the aims of democratizing our society and growing our economy inclusively can only be realized through a responsive, accountable, effective and efficient local government system that is part of a developmental state.

The Local Government Turnaround Strategy continues to argue that although a number of measures to support and strengthen local government have been undertaken, there are still many things that need to be fine-tuned as far as this sphere of government is concerned. It has been nine years since the new local government system was introduced, yet there are still worrying trends and signs that are undermining the advancement and accomplishments achieved thus far. The country faces a great development risk if local government fails.

The Local Government Turnaround Strategy (2009) defines an ideal municipality in terms of the following objectives:

- It must be able to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities.
- It must be responsive to the needs of the local community.
- It must ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner.
- It must promote social and economic development.
- It must promote a safe and healthy environment.
- It must encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government.
- It must facilitate a culture of public service and accountability amongst its staff

The ultimate goal of meeting the above objectives is to ensure the creation of liveable, integrated and inclusive cities, towns and rural areas, where local economic development is managed in an effective and efficient manner so that there can be sensible community empowerment and equitable redistribution of resources.

The 283 municipalities in South Africa have different capacities and are faced with different social and economic challenges. The common challenge is that of food

insecurity. The Msunduzi Municipality has an Integrated Economic Development Services (IEDS) branch which is aimed at implementing policies and programmes intended to provide support and to promote enterprises owned by previously disadvantaged individuals, groups, or communities, in order to bring them into the mainstream of the economy (KZN Annual Performance Plan, 2010/2011).

According to this performance plan, The IEDS branch comprises of the following sub-programmes; (i) Enterprise Development, (ii) Local Economic Development (LED), and (iii) Economic Empowerment, as well as the Growth Empowerment Funds. The following table presents the structure of the IEDS branch and its purpose, as well as its strategic goals.

Table 3.4 Integrated Economic Development Services (IEDS)

PROGRAMME 2: INTEGRATED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES (IEDS)	SUB-PROGRAMMES
<p>Aim/ purpose:</p> <p>To implement policies and programmes aimed at supporting and promoting enterprises owned by previously disadvantaged individuals, groups, or communities in order to bring them into the mainstream of the economy</p> <p>Strategic goals :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a business environment conducive to the creation of sustainable jobs • Facilitate skills development • Facilitate access to the asset base for the poor • Promote SMMEs and Social Enterprises (Co-operatives) • Promote Black Economic Empowerment 	<p>Sub-programme 1: Enterprise Development</p> <p><i>Strategic Objective:</i> To support and develop businesses and social enterprises</p>
	<p>Sub-programme 2: Local Economic Development</p> <p><i>Strategic Objective:</i> To develop a pipeline of sustainable LED projects that are partnership-based and leverage public and private resources to fund them, as well as build the capacity of municipalities and other local stakeholders to plan and manage local economic development</p>
	<p>Sub-programme 3: Economic Empowerment</p> <p><i>Strategic Objective:</i> To facilitate the process of empowerment and the creation of an enabling business environment for previously disadvantaged individuals</p>

Source: (KZN Annual Performance Plan, 2010/2011).

Hindson and Meyer-Stammer (2007:10) define LED as “a process in which partnerships between local government, the private sector and the community are

established to manage local, and access external, resources that can be used to stimulate the economy of a well-defined territory.” This definition sees LED as a tool to provide job opportunities for local people as well as a means through which to keep the money circulating within the community. It postulates that LED is responsible for facilitating partnered development between the local government, community, private sector, NGO’s and any other stakeholders. It is also defined as a process initiated from the inside or endogenous economic development, whereby local people work together to achieve sustainable economic growth that brings economic benefits and quality of life improvements for all the community (Rogerson, 1994:31).

Local economic development strategies are needed in order for economic growth to be achieved. It is therefore important for municipalities to prioritise it through their integrated development plans. The Local Government Turnaround Strategy (2009) stipulates that a related 2014 goal is to halve unemployment and poverty. Through the municipalities’ procurements of services and by using labour-intensive methods to maintain and build infrastructure, they are meant to increase participation in the local economy and create sustainable work opportunities for the poor so that they can enjoy sustainable livelihoods.

The problem is that the current economic strategies are not able to reach poor rural communities. It has been observed that poor people, especially from rural areas governed by traditional authorities, have not been able to take part in the local economy; hence they cannot enjoy the economic benefits. There is evidence that substantial growth in the economy can significantly reduce poverty and food insecurity (Hendricks and Lyne, 2009:1).

3.12 Conclusion

While there are good food security policies in South Africa, some crucial cracks have been identified regarding these policies. It has been established that the Department of Agriculture, as the custodian of food security in the country, does not have adequate capacity to implement the policies, and it lacks proper and clear monitoring and evaluation systems. The result is that many of these policies are ineffective. Food garden policies are not helping in terms of taking the projects to the desired levels. They focus on the formulation of the projects and their implementation, while issues of sustainable growth, infrastructure development and on-going capacity building are often overlooked. The above discussion has shown that food security happens in the context of a capital economy and 'security' has to be broader in order to enable food sustainability and healthy population. Local money streams, connection to the markets, infrastructural development and local economic opportunities should improve in order to give way to better living standards, improved food security and sustainable livelihoods.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This study is geared towards understanding both operations and the benefits of food gardening from the point of view of beneficiaries and practitioners. The study required use of qualitative methods in order to pursue the relevance of food gardens as well as the links with people's perceptions of food security in the areas studied. This approach was selected because it allowed me to study all the elements involved and to observe certain dynamics among food garden practitioners.

A great deal of data was collected through observation of nonverbal messages. Through the use of qualitative methods, it was possible to engage in in-depth interactions with the respondents. Quantitative methods were used to supplement qualitative data to ascertain the current socio-economic status of the respondents, and to have a general picture of the underlying factors that led to the vulnerability context from which many South Africans are trying to escape.

This study made use of the following data sources: (1) qualitative interviews and focus group discussions, and (2) quantitative assessment of food security status of selected households in the Msunduzi Municipality. In addition to that, various local, national and international reports on food security issues were examined, as reflected in the following Chapters.

4.2 Population

Although there are many community gardens in the municipality, I chose to focus on the two community gardens that are fully functional. There are hundreds of households that are partaking in food gardening within the municipality. The population consists mostly of women who use gardening as the main source of

their livelihoods, or to supplement household income. Although men sometimes do partake in food gardening, they are very few.

4.3 Sampling

I used convenience sampling to select the respondents from lists of beneficiaries supplied by organisations working in the area. The study was conducted in two completely different settings. The sites were chosen due to the limited budget. The sites were chosen because they were easily accessible to me. The sample gave me an opportunity to examine food security in two different settings. One was an urban setting with small yards, a context where there might be issues related to entitlement to land for homestead and community gardens that are different to those in rural areas. Taking into account the fact that the livelihood systems of these two areas are not entirely the same, a sample of one community garden based at Vulindlela, and one community garden based at Imbali Township was taken.

Open-ended questions were used during data collection to elicit elaborate and detailed responses. It was necessary for me to spend time with the respondents, establishing trust using verbal questions, while at the same time gathering the necessary data in a way that would not intimidate the respondents. Qualitative methods allowed space for flexibility and creativity, and it enabled me to study food security and sustainability issues in the Msunduzi Municipality in depth, through direct interactions, while respecting the dignity of the respondents. I was aware of the fact that the methods used have differing strengths and weaknesses. As Terre Blanche et al (2007) affirm, “They constitute alternative, not opposing, research strategies.”

A list of all community gardens in the Msunduzi Municipality was obtained from LIMA. The reasons for choosing the two community gardens were twofold. First,

the sites were easily accessible to me, second because the study intended to ascertain the use of gardening as a livelihood strategy in the urban area and the rural area comparatively. I decided to focus only on the two fully functional gardens because the aim of the study was not to assess the successes and failures of community gardens, but the aim was to determine the extent to which these gardens are able to contribute to sustainable livelihoods in the two areas. Hence it would have been futile to include community gardens that are not fully functional. Unstructured interviews and focus groups were used to obtain the required data. These tools were used to obtain the following information.

- Socio-demographic data of homestead and community food gardens, with a specific focus on their food security status and coping strategies.
- The perceptions of beneficiaries regarding food security and sustainability.
- Their access to resources/assets, such as land and production inputs.
- The extent to which food garden projects are sustainable.

Five people were interviewed from each of the two community gardens. The aim of these interviews was to get the perceptions of the community garden practitioners with regards to the contribution of their gardens to sustainable livelihoods. Two focus group meetings were held in both areas that are included in the study. The initial plan was that each focus group meeting would consist of five community members. But in Vulindlela six people attended the focus group meeting, and they were all accommodated. What was even more interesting was that the sixth person was a male, and I thought that, given the fact that there was a small number of men in the area who were partaking in community gardens, it would bring more value to the process to include him even though he came about ten minutes after the meeting had started.

A total of twenty community members who are partaking in individual household food gardens were interviewed; ten from Vulindlela and ten from Imbali Township.

These twenty respondents were included in order to get their perceptions about the role played by their individual gardens in providing sustainable livelihoods. Others interviewed include two community facilitators from LIMA¹³ and one representative from the Department of Agriculture. It was anticipated that these respondents would provide valuable information regarding the institutional support given to the community garden practitioner. The original plan was to interview two ward councillors from both of the research sites, but the plan had to be readjusted due to the fact that there was a new municipal councillor in Imbali Township who had just taken over after the local government elections. To assess the level of continuity from the recent past to the present, it was felt that it would be necessary to interview the incoming and outgoing councillors. To resolve this problem, both the new and the outgoing councillors in Imbali were interviewed and they were both males. One traditional leader from Vulindlela was interviewed, although there were problems in the beginning in terms of securing an appointment.

This takes the total number of the sample to thirty-eight men and women aged between 30-70 years¹⁴. I therefore used a convenience sampling which is a non-probability sampling technique. This type of sampling involves selecting participants who are available without any prior rationale (Terre Blanche et al, 2007). Hence I am confident that the selected sample contains all the important characteristics of the population from which it is drawn.

¹³ LIMA stands for Rural Development Foundation. The organization was founded in 1989 as a non-profit organization, and it specialises in agricultural projects.

¹⁴ Sample Breakdown: twenty household food garden practitioners, eleven community garden practitioners, three local government counselors (1 from Vulindlela and 2 from Imbali Township), one traditional leader from Vulindlela, two community facilitators from LIMA, one official from the Department of Agriculture, one official from Agri-Business Agency.

Two LIMA facilitators who work in Vulindlela and Imbali Township played a vital role in organizing people for the focus group meetings and interview sessions. Their familiarity with the local people, their culture and customs served as an advantage. These facilitators provided guidance in terms of how the people in the community should be approached. The respondents took part in the study voluntarily. As explained in Chapter Five, the respondents were of different ages and they came from the communities affected by food insecurity within the Msunduzi Municipality. All the interviews took approximately 30 to 45 minutes.

4.4 Research Design and Data Collection

The study is interpretative in nature. Mixed research methods were used to obtain the required data. The quantitative methods were used because there was a need to profile the sampled households¹⁵ to find out key information on household socio-economic status. This was done to assess benefits against household needs, and to determine if food gardening is making a difference in terms of improving the livelihoods of individual households. Qualitative data was collected in the form of numbers of people in the sampled households, their level of education and their motivation to partake in food gardening.

Qualitative methods were deemed most appropriate due to the fact that they focus on meaning, experience and understanding. Data was collected in the form of verbal responses. Respondents were asked questions on operation of gardens, their cultivation practices, their perceptions of food security and sustainability, constitution of their groups and sizes of their gardens, how the environmental factors affected them, how often they worked on the gardens, what their needs were, what crops they planted, how they shared the yields, their responses were

¹⁵ The 'sampled households' refer to households in which the individual respondents reside. All households of individual respondents partaking in community gardens were sampled.

carefully recorded and the findings were added to information gleaned from my observations, interviews and focus groups to provide a holistic analysis. This type of research design provided an opportunity for me to interact effectively with community members, some of whom are in structured projects, and some are doing home gardens for themselves. With the intention to understand the experiences of these community members, qualitative methods were most relevant and appropriate.

4.5 Focus Groups

The focus group discussions consisted of community garden members from Msunduzi Municipality. Two focus group meetings were held and they consisted mostly of women residing in Vulindlela and Imbali Township. The majority were in the management committee of the community gardens. The presence of committee members made it possible to discuss issues of operations and management of the gardens, as well as their relationship with LIMA and the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Department of Agriculture. The focus group method was chosen because people in the sample knew each other and therefore it was envisaged that they would be comfortable to share information about their community gardens, issues that affect them as a group. The meetings also enabled me to observe how members interact with one another, how they perceived issues of food security and sustainable livelihoods, and how these issues affect them as a group.

It is recognised that some people may agree to a certain view raised by a group member just because they do not want to disappoint that person. Some people in the meetings were somewhat reserved at the beginning and did not want to participate fully; this was possibly due to the fact that I was introduced to them by LIMA officials. Perhaps they did not want to say something that would offend LIMA and the Department of Agriculture. To address these issues, sessions were not

audio-recorded as was originally planned, and group norms were agreed upon - which included the commitment that whatever was discussed in the meeting would not be repeated to others afterwards, and that the information shared would not reveal their identities. To make it easy for the respondents to participate, LIMA officials did not attend the focus group meetings. A freer atmosphere prevailed at the end.

4.6 Unstructured Interviews

All respondents were interviewed once¹⁶. I felt it necessary to conduct unstructured interviews to supplement data obtained through focus groups. The main reason for choosing this data collection tool is that food security and sustainable livelihoods are very complex concepts and are sometimes difficult to accurately translate into IsiZulu (the language that is spoken by the respondents in the sample). It was therefore necessary to engage in one-to-one interviews with the respondents so that questions could be adequately clarified, and, if it was detected that the respondents did not understand, articulated in different ways. This enabled the issues to be explored deeply, as the situation required.

It was noticed that not all the respondents were comfortable with sharing personal information, such as household income, with a stranger. They were given an option to not have their identities recorded during interviews. Some of the challenges faced were that some respondents were not available when their households were visited. This could have been prevented by making appointments, but it would not be easy to do so since the households are so far

¹⁶ Except for the community garden practitioners where ten unstructured interviews were held with the same respondents who had attended the focus group meetings. This was done to consolidate the information obtained from focus group meetings, and to assess the socio-economic status of each community garden practitioner.

apart, especially in Vulindlela. Making appointments was tried in Imbali Township and it worked because households are clustered together.

4.7 Direct Observations

Observations were made during focus group discussions and unstructured interviews. Food gardens identified by LIMA officials as existing in the Msunduzi Municipality were visited; observations on resources and assets available, such as fencing and water tanks were made. Observations on types of crops grown were also made and the plot sizes were measured. Observations were done to supplement and validate data collected and information gathered during interviews. The interviews were conducted with the food garden practitioners at their homes, while the focus group discussions were conducted at the community gardens. This helped me in terms of conducting visual assessments of the plots. In this way, both the food garden practitioners and their gardens were observed, which helped in collecting data that may have not been shared by food garden practitioners.

4.8 Data Analysis

Data was recorded and transcribed verbatim¹⁷ and it was manually coded. This coding refers to subsequent refining of categories, understanding of responses and body language and other observations. I took different colored highlighters for each code, whereby every response is coded for relevant themes. All text-based data was manually labeled or coded chronologically and thematically. The way the data was collected and the goal of the research were determining factors in the design of this coding scheme. The major part of the analysis consisted of making sense of people's descriptions of their situations and perceptions since this was

¹⁷ Except for focus groups where the focus groups were not recorded

qualitative research. Coding merely assisted in locating descriptions of particular themes and issues easily from the quantity of data.

4.9 Ethical Considerations

This research did not involve minors. It sought informed consent from participants and confidentiality was guaranteed. Possible identification of specific people by their titles or positions of authority was minimized by ensuring that risk-free information is discussed. Although thirty-four informed consent forms were prepared, only four of them were completed. When the forms were introduced in the first focus group meeting in Vulindlela, it seemed there was a sense of suspicion and unwillingness amongst the respondents. The respondents started to relate how they had been misled before by certain department officials who made them sign forms with the promise that they would provide them with support, which they never received. Verbal consent was then requested. Informed consent from the rest of the respondents was obtained verbally.

4.10 Justification of the Study

Food security is a serious problem in every developing country such as South Africa, and it is important to understand it from the point of view of those affected. The findings of this research will therefore address areas that need to be improved in order to promote community and household garden projects that are to contribute to better livelihood outcomes. Not enough research has been done about the ability of vulnerable and food insecure communities and households to “generate” food that can later be available and be accessed and utilized as per the definitions of food security.

Most literature about food security seems to focus on issues of access, availability and utilization of food, and they neglect what is surely the most important part – how food is generated before it can be accessed and utilized. The economic climate and food price volatility in the country have prevented poor people from

accessing adequate food; hence there is a need for poor people to be empowered to generate their own food. The study explores issues that hinder the successful generation of food in poor communities and households. Issues of sustainability play a significant role in this study. It is important to know to what extent the community-based generating of food can be sustainable.

The findings of this study will help organizations working in poor communities, including local government structures, to understand issues of food security better so that they can plan their interventions in ways that can benefit the community. If food garden projects are well supported and sustainable, people can produce more crops to sell to local markets.

4.11 Limitations

This study focused on only two community food gardens and twenty home food gardens in the Msunduzi Municipality. The results of the study may not be generalized in an absolutist fashion to other community or home food gardens beyond the Msunduzi Municipality. It has however generated useful trends and factors to be considered when engaging in food security initiatives and trends.

Whilst care was taken to draw a convenience sample from the population, it may not be representative and valid for the whole population due to the fact that some information about the population came to light in the middle of the study. To some extent, the sample was also chosen on logistical grounds determined by the resources available for the study such as time, manpower, funds and transportation. The participation of males in the sample was proportionately smaller compared to the participation of females in the population of garden practitioners generally; hence the sample may not contain all the important characteristics of the population from which it was drawn.

The methods used in this study made it possible to elicit responses that address the objectives of the study. Through focus group discussions and unstructured interviews, perceptions of food garden practitioners with regard to food security, sustainability, benefits of partaking in food gardening and constraints thereof, were well explored. Responses from focus group discussions and unstructured interviews were often rich and elaborate, and they gave a full picture of the ability of food gardens to provide long term change and sustainable livelihoods.

CHAPTER FIVE: FOOD SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS: COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

5.1 Introduction

The analysis of results collected from the field are presented in this Chapter, in line with the research objectives and questions stated in Chapter One. Definitions of food security focus on issues of availability, access and utilisation, and thus overlook the very important dimension of food security which is food generation.

For food to be available, accessed and utilised, it needs to be generated at local level where it can be easily accessed by poor people who have limited financial resources. Hence the study focused on the ability of food garden practitioners to generate adequate food for their own consumptions, and for commercial purposes. This view is supported by Sen who believed that famine and food insecurity take place in situations of moderate to good availability of food. He then presents an alternative approach to food insecurity which contrasts sharply with the more usual food availability approaches. His approach concentrates more on the ability of people to command food through various legal livelihood strategies at their disposal, including the use of production and trade opportunities. Poverty, starvation and food insecurity is a matter of people not having food to eat, and not a matter of people not having adequate food available to eat (Sen, 1981).

Hence the study was geared towards examining how food garden practitioners in Msunduzi Municipality perceived food security and sustainability, and to find out if food gardens can provide sustainable livelihoods. The study also intended to explore what assets are there in the community to enable them to achieve long-term change. Analysed data presented in this Chapter was collected from unstructured interviews, focus group discussions and observations.

5.2 Socio-Demographic Data

5.2.1 Profile of Zimiseleni Community Garden (Vulindlela area)

Zimiseleni Community Garden is situated in Vulindlela, at an area called Maswazini in ward 8, and it falls under Msunduzi Municipality in Pietermaritzburg. Vulindlela is situated in the South-West of the city of Pietermaritzburg. The area is ruled by three chiefs. The area has not reached adequate levels of infrastructural development regarding water, electricity and road provisions. The residents use buses when they want to go to town, since the taxis are reluctant to service some parts of the area due to bad conditions of the roads.

The garden was founded many years ago and the land was made available by the chief in a bid to fight food insecurity. When the project started the garden was well maintained, but as membership changed the garden became neglected. In 2009, the Department of Agriculture, LIMA and the local leadership decided to revive the garden by selecting new members who were already partaking in homestead food gardens. Invitations for membership were extended to ten members of the community. The arrangement was that the garden would be supported and monitored by the Department and Lima, in line with the KZN Policy on Food Gardens, which is discussed in Chapter Three.

Members of Zimiseleni community garden are local residents. The size of the garden is approximately 1.8 ha and it consists of nine members. The aim of the project when it was established was to produce traditional crops for home consumption and commercial purposes as this require little or no irrigation. These crops include taro plant, Bambara nuts, sweet potatoes, potatoes and dry beans. The original vision of the food garden was that income from produce sales would contribute towards children's tuition fees and other basic needs, since unemployment in the area is rife. But it seems that it is difficult to fulfil this vision since the garden practitioners are not able to make enough sales, and the quantity

of their produce does not meet the requirements of the markets, as it will be discussed later.

5.2.2 Profile of Zenzele Community Garden (Imbali Township)

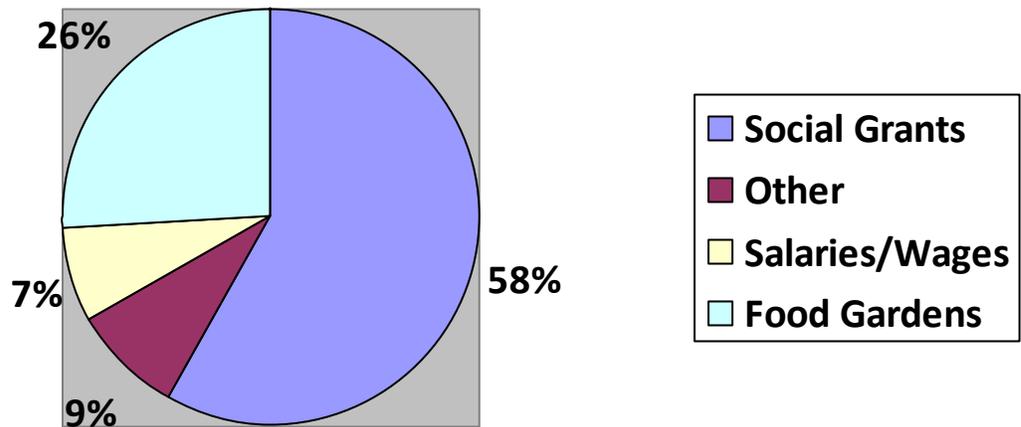
The name of this community garden project is Zenzele Senior Citizens Club. It is situated in Imbali Township in Pietermaritzburg. Imbali is one of the oldest townships situated in KZN Midlands, within the Msunduzi Municipality. It is 15 kilometres away from the city of Pietermaritzburg. Zenzele Community Garden has three project sites, namely:

- Zenzele 1 situated at Imbali Unit 13 (size: 0.03 ha)
- Zenzele 2 situated at Imbali Unit 2 (size:0.15 ha)
- Zenzele 3 situated at Imbali Unit CC (size: 0.09 ha)

The garden was founded by six elderly women who felt that they needed to do something to address food insecurity. At the time, the garden was used as a dumping site. The municipality was happy when they were approached by the six women, as they felt that the garden project would help in keeping the area clean. In 1992, forty-seven senior citizens joined the project, and it was at this time that LIMA and the Department of Agriculture undertook to sponsor the project. Fencing was erected, a water tank was provided and basic production inputs were provided. The project intended to produce a wide range of leafy and traditional vegetables for commercial sales and home consumption for poverty stricken and elderly households. Some of the crops they plant are cabbage, spinach, carrot, lettuce, beetroot, potatoes, brinjal, taro plant, and sweet potatoes, maize, kale and Bambara nuts.

5.3 Economic Activities in Sampled Communities

Figure 5.1 Key Economic Activities



Most people in the area are elderly men and women who are unemployed and they live with their grandchildren. As demonstrated in figure 5.1 above, social grants, food gardens and salaries are their main livelihood strategies. Table 5.1 below shows a comprehensive list of all economic activities that people in this municipality engage in for their livelihoods.

Table 5.1: List of Economic Activities

Vulindlela Area	Imbali Township
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social grants • Food gardening • Mud and concrete block making • Plastering of houses • Roof thatching • Maintenance and repair of fences • Knitting and sewing • Herbalism • Hawking • Salary/wages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social grants • Food gardening • Hawking • Home-based Poultry • Salary/wages • Knitting and sewing • Concrete block making

As shown in table 5.1 above, some people in the area are making mud blocks which they sell to generate income. Others do plastering, roof thatching and other income generating activities. The maintenance of fences is important in Vulindlela area because of the livestock damage. The need for frequent general repairs follows from the nature of the materials, the often inadequate mastery of the technology, and the economic constraints within which it is applied. Some women in both communities are involved in knitting and sewing, food gardening and other ways of making money outside formal employment. Some people are involved in the practice of herbalism and hawking. Herbalism is more prevalent in Vulindlela.

5.4 Management of the Community Gardens

In terms of the information gathered during focus group meetings, interviews and observations, the community food gardens do not have formal management structures. They do not have management committees, nor do they have a written constitution. When community garden members want to discuss issues they gather and brainstorm solutions. Although they do not have an appointed chairperson, it was observed that there is one woman in each of the gardens who is taking care of management duties. It was observed during focus group meetings that these two women were more talkative and provided most of the answers. When the groups were not sure of the answers they would look at them.

Although they do have unwritten norms and rules that govern their operations, one could argue that operating without a constitution is a poor practice and opens the groups to lack of institutional memory in case something happens to informal leaders. There is nothing wrong with having informal structures *per se*, as they can provide necessary leadership and guidance to the group when needed. The problem is that when projects do not have formally and democratically elected structures they tend to depend on one or two people (who are usually the founders) in administration matters and the rest of the group defers responsibility. It becomes even more problematic when the person who is responsible for overseeing daily management of the project passes on. Hence there is a need to allow formal structures to take over these projects, as not having them is likely to impact on the sustainability of the projects and their ability to grow. Formal leadership structures enable community projects and groups to become more appropriate, effective and efficient, and it also enables them to develop and expand (Swanepoel, 1997:17).

5.5 Age and Gender Distribution of Food Garden Practitioners and Household Headship

Food gardening in the Msunduzi Municipality is done by people who have families to support, as a form of a livelihood strategy. Most of these people are females. The mean age of the respondents ($n = 11$) who were members of the community gardens was 49.8 years ($SD=7.93$), with the youngest person being 39 and the oldest 61 years. In the sample of homestead gardens, 18 respondents were females and two were males. The mean age of the respondents ($n = 20$) was 44.3 years ($SD=7.93$), with the youngest person being 36 and the oldest 59 years.

The percentage of female-headed households in Msunduzi Municipality is very high. This is due to factors such as marital dissolution and high mortality among males, particularly at older ages. Declines in male headship relate to lower life expectancy of males, which has resulted in the reassignment of headship to women. Most respondents had lost their husbands and they were left with the responsibility to lead the family towards better livelihood outcomes. These females who are heading households are generally older and poorer than male heads of households due to the loss of remittances from men. It is said that in KwaZulu-Natal alone, the prevalence of this phenomenon is 39% of households (Nzimande, 2010).

One of the first questions asked who the heads of the households were. Some female respondents in Vulindlela area found this question difficult to answer, as opposed to the respondents in Imbali Township who provided their responses with ease. At times, I had to rephrase the question to make it easy for them to provide their responses.

A follow up question was asked to the respondents in Vulindlela as to how it made them feel to be the heads of the households. They indicated that traditionally they

are not supposed to be the heads of the households, and that even though they are carrying out functions of a household head; they still did not regard themselves as the heads. Some pointed out that they had brothers and uncles who lived somewhere else and that when cultural activities are done they call them. Although not said explicitly in these terms, they regarded their brothers and uncles as the heads of the households.

People in Vulindlela take issues of household headship very seriously. Women in this area still believe that it is the duty of a man to head the household, even if that man is not their husband, as long as they are related patrilineally to them or to the deceased husband. This concurs with Mtshali's view that the household head is considered to be the most important person in the household (Mtshali, 2002). In Imbali Township it was a different story. Women who are heading households appear to be well-empowered and well aware of their rights as women. For them a head of a household is anybody who is able to provide for the family financially. That person can have overriding authority when it comes to decision-making irrespective of his or her gender.

This difference points to the fact that rural women are still not fully liberated. Development in the area has not done enough to empower women and to educate them about their rights. It cannot be right that women who carry out all the duties of a head are not seeing themselves as the heads of the households. One would agree with Harley and Fortheringham (1999:120) who once argued that poor rural women are facing discrimination and oppression from four sides, "because they are black, because they are women, because they are poor and because they live in rural areas."

5.6 Level of Education, Income and Household Size

The level of education of the community garden members was very low. They had lower primary education. The highest level of education was grade 10, and 30% of the respondents never went to school. This high level of illiteracy is cause for concern, and it serves as evidence that South Africa is still faced with the vestiges of the apartheid system. It is said that countries which have invested in education have benefited tremendously in terms of better economic growth, and reduced poverty and food insecurity levels (UNESCO, 2003). Ramphele believes that the apartheid system is still haunting this country, and that it is difficult to erase the past that left many of our parents and grandparents uneducated (Ramphele, 2008:24).

The apartheid government had a separate development policy which ensured that only the white population was able to have access to resources and assets. Black people in this country were given inferior education during the apartheid government. Most of them did not get the chance to attend school since they were forced to drop out to look after the livestock, while their parents engaged in food gardening and other livelihood strategies for the survival of the household.

It appears that more still needs to be done to ensure that all people have access to equal, effective and efficient education system. The poorly managed education system is somewhat related to food security at both the micro and macro levels. At the micro level, illiterate individuals are less productive, and they are usually trapped in low-paying occupations and remain at very low levels of living. At the macro level, nations with illiterate or less-educated citizens cannot progress well, as the country cannot increase its outputs substantially; as a result people endure a low standard of living (UNESCO, 2003).

The mean size of households in both communities was 7.1 (SD: 2.81). The sizes of households in Imbali Township and Vulindlela area were not the same. Vulindlela had many members in their households as compared to Imbali Township. This can be attributed to the spirit of *Ubuntu* that head of households in the area adhere to, where a head of the household may allow his/her siblings and relatives to live in his/her household. Even though many people in Vulindlela have migrated to urban areas, children still remain in rural areas, and they form a great portion of the household size.

The extended family also form a substantial portion of the household, hence the structures of the homestead in Vulindlela are different from those found in Imbali Township. The average household in Vulindlela is a cluster of two to three dwellings, with thatched rondavels alongside buildings with single- and double-pitched roofs. In Imbali Township, most homesteads are four-roomed houses made up of cement blocks with a steel door and asbestos roof.

Most households in Vulindlela consisted of grandparents and their grandchildren who were collecting Social Grants such as old age pensions and child support grants. These grants were the main source of income in the households partaking in the sampled community food gardens. Most respondents were unemployed while others had part-time jobs. The average income of the Vulindlela households was R1373 per month per household of about nine members, with social grants being the biggest contributor to household income. The average income of the households in Imbali Township was R1600 per month, per household of about seven members.

This income is not sufficient to meet the needs of the family that has seven members. This deficit points to the fact that food security is not only about food availability, because food can be available in the markets, but that is of no use if

people do not have money to access it. Even in first world countries where food is in abundant supply, people can still go hungry if they cannot afford to buy it. Seaman et al (2000:1) views this as a crucial insight, since there is no “technical reason for markets to meet subsistence needs, and no moral or legal reason why they should.” Sen stresses that people affected by food insecurity should be enabled to engage in what he calls “production based entitlements” .This refers to the situation where people are able to generate their own food, rather than relying on the markets (Devereux,2001).

5.7 Food Security in the Msunduzi Municipality

Community garden members defined food security as a state when you have “easy, adequate and uninterrupted” access to “filling and nutritious” meal. They defined food insecurity as an inability to have access to food, resources and sufficient income to meet their basic needs on a continuous basis, being unemployed, the inability “to buy the things you like” such as clothes, the inability to afford to send your children to school, when you are sick and you cannot afford to take a taxi to the nearest health care centre. This shows that apart from having access to personal assets, people’s livelihoods can benefit from access to public assets such as public health facilities (Mwangi and Markelova,2008). These facilities play an important role in improving people’s livelihoods.

It is observable that people continue to define food security in a broad sense, not only in terms of food, but from the wider perspective of general improvement in their well-being. Their definition includes a very important dimension of food security which is not limited to food access and availability, as stated by Guha-Khasnobis et al (2007:15). This dimension includes other factors such as bad health, illiteracy and lack of access to social services as well as a state of vulnerability and powerlessness. That is why they talk about clothes, taxis, and the nearest health care facility. For these people, livelihood security means having

access to all the necessary resources and assets, tangible and intangible, of which food security is one component.

Others in the focus groups defined food insecurity as having no access to employment opportunities, resources, skills and training. In an individual interview, a respondent defined food insecurity as “lack of regular access to adequate, decent and sustainable livelihoods.” Most food garden practitioners lack education and training on basic agricultural skills. This brings forth the importance of institutional support as a vital social capital, which will be discussed in Chapter Six.

Respondents in homestead garden interviews defined food insecurity as a state where you go to bed without having eaten anything, and not knowing when you will get your next meal and where it will come from. One respondent defined food insecurity as “*ukungazi ukuthi kufanele uthatheni uyihlanganise nani ukuze uthole ukudla* (not knowing what to do to obtain food)”.

About 90% of respondents partaking in homestead and community gardens are unemployed. They depend on food garden produce and social grants for survival. The issue of security of land tenure is problematic especially in Imbali Township, where people have had to use small pieces of municipal-owned land and open grounds or wastelands in their vicinity, due to the lack of access to adequate land. The majority of the respondents indicated that food does not last in their households. Most of them indicated that food is finished before the end of the month.

The lack of employment opportunities has forced many households to find coping strategies such as cutting down on the amount of food they consume, with a view to making ends meet. Some have had to borrow monies from loan sharks who charge exorbitant interest, thus putting the sustainability of their livelihoods at risk

since they end up owing large amounts of money. One respondent who is a pensioner indicated that she was facing a situation whereby she had to repay monies she had borrowed from loan sharks every month end and this has affected the household's budget.

It is evident that borrowing money from loan sharks increases people's vulnerability and it impacts negatively on their fragile livelihood strategies and outcomes, as households are sinking more and more into debt. It becomes difficult to strike a balance between maintaining their families and servicing their debt. These livelihood strategies are fragile since they are dependent on factors such as access to land and other resources, which are beyond the food gardeners' control.

In Vulindlela, they engage in the practice of *ukunana* (asking for food gifts from neighbours) as a coping strategy when food is finished in the household. This practice is successful in Vulindlela since community members in the area are so generous and they adhere to the principles of *Ubuntu*. In Imbali Township they find it difficult to engage in the practice of *ukunana* because "*abantu bagiya ngethambo lakho* (you become a laughing stock)" as one respondent put it.

It is difficult for some households to make their children understand the situation facing their households. This is often the case when the financial position of households suddenly drops as a result of retrenchment or death of bread winner. In Imbali Township there was an old woman who related her story about the death of her son who was the bread winner. His death left the family destitute because he was the only one working in the family, and he was the one servicing the bond. Fortunately he had enough insurance to cover the balance left on the bond. When the family was visited for an interview, the grandmother was sitting outside the house, eating porridge made of mealie meal.

The respondent in question stated that it was the only food she had, and that she did not have electricity in the house. The electricity was cut off months ago after she failed to settle her overdue account. She related how she was finding it difficult to explain the situation to her grandchildren who were at school at the time of the interview. The children were not used to eating vegetables, which the respondent had plenty of in the garden. “They want to eat fancy food even when there is no money in the household,” said the respondent. There were many other respondents who shared her sentiments. For instance, at the time of the fieldwork for the research was carried out, children were about to break for September holidays. The respondents were concerned that this would affect their household budget as children consumed more food when they were at home.

5.8 Sustainable Livelihoods

The respondents were asked about whether food gardens have provided change and improvement in their livelihoods, and whether that change and improvement was what they as the beneficiaries were seeking. They were asked what kind of change and improvement they would like to see and whether the gardens were providing that change. They were also asked how long that change should last. Respondents partaking in community food gardens defined change as a state when people have continual employment and income opportunities.

A respondent in one of the focus groups stated that it was not enough to have food in the household; they also need to have ‘money’ from which they could derive future livelihoods. The implication from such a statement is that one needs to have a clear source of livelihoods that can be easily sustained. “*Ukuba nokudla ungenayo imali kuwuphawu lokuqala lokuhlaselela kwendlala* (having food while you do not have money is the first sign of food insecurity),” added another respondent. This statement implies that the respondents were concerned about where their next meal would come from. They felt that money was the cornerstone of

sustainable livelihoods. They stated that in their view development initiatives should be able to produce changes that last for a long time, change that will benefit generations to come.

The respondents in homestead gardens defined sustainability as change that does not take place on an *ad hoc* basis; it is change that lasts forever, at least “for as long as it is needed” said one respondent. This change, as one respondent put it, “must provide tangible and long term results that speak to the needs of the community” and it must bring about satisfaction and resilience. Talking about LIMA’s plans to exit the community, another respondent said, “*abangasilahli bahlale nathi njalo*” meaning they must not forsake us, they must be with us now and again.”

A male respondent interviewed in Imbali Township stated that sustainability cannot take place unless they have sufficient production inputs such as seeds and fertilizer, as well as gardening tools. Others identified fencing, lack of adequate water for irrigation, pesticides, land, and continuous institutional support as the resources that are lacking. These resources, according to the respondent, must be made available to households in the community to facilitate sustainability. The majority of the respondents stated that the government and LIMA must provide these resources.

Another problem that affects sustainability in homestead gardens is the lack of fencing, which has led to theft and livestock damage and other environmental factors such as seasonality and climate change. However there was one respondent who felt that using ‘time frame’ as an indicator for sustainability is misleading. According to this respondent, “what is important is that people must not be given things for free,” as this is likely to impact on the sustainability of any

project. The respondent felt that if people are given things for free they are likely to rely on government and other development institutions.

The perceptions of respondents were explored regarding the sustainability of development programmes in the sampled areas. The respondents stated that the development programmes are not sustainable since they are not able to provide visible and lasting change. These programmes, according to the respondents, do not encourage community participation and they follow a top-down approach. The respondents were concerned that they might not be able to survive without LIMA. At the time of the present fieldwork, LIMA was due to terminate the services it was rendering to the community after four months. They felt that LIMA should postpone its exit until they are properly groomed to continue on their own.

The community garden members in both sampled areas have a fund where they keep all proceeds from produce sales. The members also contribute a certain amount every month to the fund. They use this fund to purchase basic inputs for their community garden. Members of the community garden are allowed to borrow money from the fund, interest free. The main aim of the fund is to enable the community members to sustain their community gardening. But it seems that the fund alone is not sufficient as it does not cover the costs of the inputs.

Social connections were cited as one of the factors that can contribute to sustainable livelihoods, but the local leadership, both traditional and local government, are “not approachable and they only network with specific elite groups in the community who are politically connected” said one respondent. Such connections can facilitate the sharing of knowledge and resources. People get social connections first by being members of community gardens, which is where ideas and insights are shared by people of common interests. Another source of social connections is through networking with other individual and groups

in the area, including local leadership and community-based institutions. These individuals, groups and institutions serve as a vital social capital for food garden practitioners.

5.9 Motivation to partake in Community Food Gardening

The motivation behind the establishment of community food gardens is the high rate of food insecurity and unemployment in the area. Community food gardens are seen as an effective and practical solution to overcome food insecurity. The main aim of the food gardens is twofold; to supplement household income and to generate an income for members most of who are poverty stricken. According to LIMA the level of education in the Municipality is very low. Basic food gardening is an ideal response to these problems in that they will enable community garden members to provide for their families.

The income made from produce sales is an addition to social grants that seem to be the main source of income in the area. This income contributes towards children's school fees and other basic needs. It is also worth noting that some people in the area are not able to access social grants due to various reasons, such as being far away from service centres and lack of documentation. Some respondents in Vulindlela, which is about 40 kilometres from the city, indicated that it is very difficult to get to town due to high taxi fares, which many people in the area can hardly afford. According to a study done by USAID in KZN municipalities, including Msunduzi Municipality, access to social grants in the area is very low and underutilised. Many people lack documents to obtain grants (Taylor et al,2010).

The produce is sold to the community as well as to the formal markets. According to the respondents, the community is sometimes not eager to buy from them; they expect the garden members to give them produce for free. Zimiseleni Community Garden members indicated that they had established a relationship with two

schools in the area with a view to supply them with basic vegetables in the future, although no agreements have been entered into. More details about the respondents' access to the markets will be discussed later on in this Chapter.

Members of the sampled community gardens stated that they partake in food gardening because of high levels of food insecurity and poverty in the area. They believe that through community gardens they can generate sustainable livelihoods. They also felt that they needed to utilise the resources at their disposal, as limited as they are. These resources include the land, and their indigenous knowledge of farming. One respondent stated that she wanted to “increase chances of having access to food.” This brings to the fore an interesting view that might need to be pursued further in future research. This view suggests that food insecurity should be analysed and defined in terms of how many “chances” people have of accessing food at any given time.

The majority of people in the sampled homestead gardens stated that they partake in food gardening because it provides additional sources of food. One respondent stated when she lost her job, she decided to pursue opportunities that could provide her with both leisure and livelihood, hence she started food gardening. One respondent put it like this, “*asisakhathazeki kakhulu ngesishebo, nakuba sibuye sihlushwe wukungabikho kwezinsiza kusebenza,*” meaning that they no longer worry about food access, although they still face resource constraints. Other respondents indicated that they were motivated by health reasons. Food gardening provided them with opportunities to exercise and at the same time gain access to nutritious food.

Factors highlighted above are very important in keeping the gardens running, as the food garden practitioners are likely to use these factors as fuel that will keep them going, and the practitioners gain a sense of pride and accomplishment, which

in turn fosters feelings of self-worth and self-confidence. Parry et al (2005) stipulated that gains from growing food independently include gardeners being relieved from purchasing vegetables or fruits from commercial sources, which creates a sense of self-reliance (Parry et al, 2005).

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Land access by homestead-based agricultural producers in South Africa is likely to play a key role in the country's economic and social development. The Land Acts introduced by the colonial and apartheid governments restricted access to land for other population groups. It is sad to note however that many homestead gardens in Imbali Township are facing serious resource constraints, such as access to land and other natural resources and productive resources. There is widespread consensus that there is a need to reform land tenure systems and relations in order to eradicate food insecurity and hunger in developing countries such as South Africa (Ghimire, 2001). As a result, most people, due to limited land, have opted to cultivate land nearby their yards, thus exposing their produce to theft and livestock damage. This land belongs to the municipality, and this practice is common in the township (see figure 5.1 below).

Figure 5.1 *Example of Homestead Food Gardens in Imbali Township*



Access to land and security of tenure for food garden practitioners in Vulindlela is not much of an issue. This is contrary to the popular view that rural women do not have ownership of land and security of tenure. The traditional leadership has made land available in the area for farming. Secure land tenure refers to a clearly defined formal, legally enforceable and long-term agreement between the current or previous owner of the land and the person who is using the land. This agreement guarantees the land dweller the enjoyment of basic human rights, subject to reasonable limitations (Roodt, 2006). This relationship defines the status of the owner by defining the duties with reference to the use of land, which all other persons must honour (Kenneth et al, 1956:4). While people living in rural areas do not have written agreements in the form of a title deed, they can be seen as having the most secured tenure because they have stable and reliable informal

agreements for the use of land with traditional leaders who are the custodians of the land.

On the other hand, many people in Imbali Township who partake in homestead gardens do not have adequate access to land. This serves as evidence that land titling and registration programmes have not succeeded in producing positive benefits, since the majority of people in South Africa, especially in rural areas, continue to hold their land successfully under indigenous customary tenure systems. Evidence is mounting that the formal title deed has not necessarily increased tenure security in South Africa. We have seen more and more people, in spite of holding formal title deeds, being evicted due to financial difficulties.

5.10 Cultivation Practices

5.10.1 Ploughing & Soil Preparation

Fertilization is, according to the respondents, a very expensive exercise, hence many farmers, especially in household gardens, have opted not to use fertilizers. It was interesting to note however that fertilization was not so much of a problem in Vulindlela since food garden practitioners in this area use *umquba* (kraal manure), which they do not buy. *Umquba* is easily available in the area since they keep many animals such as cows and goats. Even those who do not have livestock manage to find *umquba* from their neighbours. However, it is a big problem to access fertilizers for food garden practitioners in Imbali Township, since they do not have access to *umquba*.

The security of tenure, as it was discussed above, is another factor that seems to play a role in enabling communities and individual households to engage in food gardening. This has inevitably affected small scale farmers in Imbali township who, as a result of not having adequate access to land, have resorted to using small

pieces of land in their vicinity owned by the municipality. In Vulindlela the land is owned by the traditional leadership. The small scale farmers have easy access to the land although they do not have title deeds. The traditional leadership have made large pieces of land available to anyone who wants to partake in food gardens.

The only disadvantage about this type of land ownership is that community garden members cannot use it as collateral when they borrow money to scale up production. But the same can be said about Imbali township, because the food garden practitioners do not have title deeds for their community garden; they only have a 'permission to occupy' letter from the municipality. Hence they cannot use the land as collateral when they want to borrow money. One could also argue that it is good that the food garden practitioners cannot use their community garden land as a collateral, as this would expose the land to the risk of being taken away from them should they fail to repay the loan.

In Vulindlela, the respondents who are partaking in community gardening stated that there is a need for more garden tools and a shed. The shed can help them to keep the tools, and it can also serve as a shelter where they can hide when it is raining, since the garden is quite far from their houses. In summer they have to go back to their homes when it is raining, and then come back when it has eased off. This is quite a challenge for them since some of the members of the community garden have health problems.

It was revealed during interviews and focus group meetings that certain types of crops do not grow well in the food gardens. For example, in Vulindlela, it was reported that cabbage, carrot and onions do not grow well. They had decided to plant these in small quantities as they felt these waste time and money. However this reduction of quantity has had negative impacts in terms of sales as they

cannot meet the quantities required at the markets. Most cabbage planted in the gardens is used for household consumption.

Zimiseleni produces traditional crops for home consumption and commercial purposes as these require little or no irrigation. These crops include taro plant, Bambara nuts, sweet potatoes, potatoes and dry beans. These crops grow very well in the area and they plant them in large quantities. Income from produce sales contributes towards children's tuition fees and other basic needs, since unemployment in the area is rife.

At the time of the interviews, the Department of Agriculture had taken soil samples from the community gardens with the purpose of having these tested, and lime was applied to certain portions of the gardens. According to the respondents, this had never happened before. It appeared that the purpose of the testing and liming was not explained to the community; hence they expressed their dissatisfaction about the fact that they were asked not to do any planting in the area that had been limed. That was causing inconvenience and was delaying their cultivation value chain.

The Department of Agriculture supplies households in both sample communities with free seeds as part of the premier's flagship programme. This programme is called One-Home- One-Garden Campaign. But these seeds do not reach all the people who need them in the community, and they are not supplied regularly due to financial constraints. Other than this assistance, individual households have had to find the means to finance inputs out of their own pockets. As a result, some households have had to suspend cultivation as they are finding it difficult to obtain the necessary inputs.

In Imbali township, inorganic fertilizers purchased from shops are primarily used. Unlike people in Vulindlela, those in Imbali do not have access to organic fertilisers such as kraal manure to maintain soil fertility and increase production. Experts in the field of agriculture maintain that kraal manure is an excellent source of nutrition for crops (Faber et al, 2006:39). Sometimes the Imbali gardeners suffer as they do not always have enough money in their savings to buy fertilizers.

5.10.2 Tending of Crops & Maintenance

Community garden members in both sampled areas, including some household garden members in Vulindlela, were trained in basic crop production and maintenance skills, as well as management skills. The respondents in both areas indicated that they were experiencing difficulties in controlling pests, as they do not have access to pesticides. LIMA and the Department of Agriculture do not supply them with pesticides as they do not have the budget to do so. Community facilitators indicated that training was provided which focused on alternative household control methods that do not require too much money.

Although answers were sought from the respondents with regard to their knowledge about natural and homemade pesticides, their answers were not uniform. There were some who reported having tried the methods, but it was not clear whether the community garden members were using these methods, or rather to what extent they were using them. Pest damage has forced community garden members in Vulindlela to harvest produce as soon as it is ready, to avoid further damage. In Imbali township they do not use bulk harvesting, they only harvest as and when needed.

5.10.3 Weed Control

Weeds are a major problem in the sampled community gardens. Community garden members take it upon themselves to pull the weeds out at least once every week. Some members reported that they do weed control three times a week,

especially in summer. Weed control in summer is more problematic as some of the community garden members have health problems that prevent them from spending too much time in the garden. Because each community garden is subdivided according to the number of its members, some plots remain weed infested until their owners are able to attend to them. However the spirit of *Ubuntu* was observed in the community gardens, as some members were seen pulling out weeds in other people's plots.

5.10.4 Irrigation

Good yields are not possible without adequate water supply throughout the growing season (Faber et al, 2006:48). People partaking in community gardens in Vulindlela do not have adequate access to reliable sources of water. They do not have a tap or a water tank in their garden. Hence they fetch water from the nearby spring using containers. In winter it becomes problematic because the spring dries out and they have to walk longer distances to fetch water. The respondents find this difficult and tiresome, since some of them have health problems. In Imbali township they have a water tank that was sponsored by LIMA. The problem with this tank is that it relies on rain water. If there is no rain the tank becomes empty and the respondents have to fetch water from their homes.

5.10.5 Harvesting & Storage

In Imbali township they do not have a set time for harvesting. Since they do not have storage facilities, the respondents reported that they harvest crops as and when they are needed. Some crops become rotten before they are harvested due to a lack of storage facilities. In Vulindlela, they set aside a day or two where they harvest all the crops that are due to be harvested, and they store them in their homes. However they indicated that this practice was risky as some produce

becomes rotten before it can be used or sold. The lack of proper storage facilities seems to be a problem in both areas.

5.11 Access to Markets and Impact of Environmental Factors

According to the respondents, the aim and vision of the sampled community gardens is to produce food for household consumption and for the market. This is done to reduce the level of food insecurity, to improve nutrition at household level, and to create additional income opportunities. This, according to the institutions rendering support to the sampled areas, would help not only to create another stream of income for poverty-stricken families; it would also play a pivotal role in accelerating local economic development.

Some of the produce is sold to people living in the sampled communities. But the respondents in Imbali Township indicated that the community is sometimes reluctant to buy from them; they preferred to go to town to buy the same produce that they could have bought from them at half the price. The sales they were making from the community were very low. The food garden practitioners were concerned that they would not be able to survive without the help of LIMA who usually take their produce to the markets in town.

When a follow up visit was done by me towards the end of the year, the situation had changed slightly. They had sold a good deal of their produce to the community, although they were not sure how much they had made since some of the money was lent to various members of the group. They kept a sales register which reflected the sales made during the month of September and October 2011. It seemed that they were reluctant to market their produce to the community since they did not know how the community would react. They had developed dependency on LIMA and forgot that LIMA would leave them one day. This

impacted on their ability to independently manage and maintain that which was established through community development (Swanepoel, 1997:16).

Long term sustainability of this project is questionable due to the fact that only one member of the group in Imbali was responsible for all management functions, and she was the most active member. Some of the group members had health problems and they were no longer able to contribute their labour. She was the one responsible for coordinating sales in the community and the other group members were not willing to do that. “*Bashiyela konke kimina* (they leave everything to me)” said the respondent.

In Vulindlela, people in the community were willing to buy from the food garden, but most of them are poverty stricken and do not have money. In some cases they have had to donate produce to poor families for free. A sales register was not kept, which made it difficult to ascertain the value of the sales made. It was observed that there was a spirit of togetherness and solidarity amongst members of Zimiseleni community garden in Vulindlela, unlike members of Zenzele community garden in Imbali.

The food practitioners in Vulindlela were always observed working together during site visits. In Imbali, there was only one woman who was always found in the community garden working alone. She would, after seeing us, go and call everybody else from their homes. This raised questions about the commitment and dedication of these members, which, one could argue, is likely to impact adversely on the long-term sustainability of the project. However it would appear that the community in which the food gardens are situated, especially in Vulindlela, cannot be relied upon to provide a reliable market. It was revealed during the interviews that in Vulindlela most community members are very poor; they cannot afford to buy the garden produce. Most produce was given away free of charge due to the

Ubuntu principles the community of Vulindlela adhered to. They know which households are most affected by poverty and it seems that they have made a commitment to help them without expecting any form of payment.

Better access to high-value markets is needed as it could increase the local economy, and it would ensure that the common vision of the two community gardens, which is to feed themselves and make money at the same time, is fulfilled. (Hendricks and Lyne, 2009:135). It would provide an additional source of income for many households affected by food insecurity. LIMA officials assist community garden members in securing deals with the markets although “this does not happen all the time” as one respondent put it. Although they do know which markets their produce is taken to, they did not have a direct relationship with the markets. This seems to create a potential problem because LIMA will not be with them forever. The issue of dependency will be explored thoroughly in the next Chapter.

Seasonality and climate change is affecting the sampled community gardens adversely. In Vulindlela they do not have a tap in their garden; hence they depend on a nearby well, which sometimes dries out when there are no rains. It is difficult obtain water for irrigation purposes in dry seasons, and this affects their productivity. They are forced to suspend planting certain crops, especially in winter, due to the lack of water adequate water supply. In Imbali township, they do not have a tap but they were provided with a water tank which depends on rain water. High temperatures are reported to be playing a considerable role in damaging crops in the sampled community gardens. The gardens are not shaded and some crops cannot withstand high temperatures.

Due to the lack of adequate access to reliable water sources, the respondents in Imbali indicated that they end up planting the same leafy crops over and over

“such as cabbage which ends up getting rotten since they cannot eat all of it.” The markets are not responding well and “the community is not buying enough to resolve this problem.” This increased production of cabbage, on the other hand, helps them in securing deals with the markets, since they have strict requirements in terms of quantity. They cannot procure crops from a community garden that does not produce the required quantity. Another issue here is consistency. Factors such as seasonality, climate change and soil fertility, pests and other constraints affect productivity and thus make it difficult for the community gardens to meet the requirements of the markets.

In coping with the environmental factors, respondents have had to resort to methods such as crop rotation and staggered planting, although such methods sometimes do not work due to land constraints, lack of adequate labour and lack of adequate and convenient sources of water. The latter is very important since vegetables cannot be solely cultivated under rain fed conditions; other means of irrigation is extremely essential (Faber et al, 2006:35). Soil samples are sometimes taken to the lab for examination, and this is facilitated by LIMA and the Department of Agriculture.

Produce such as potatoes are in very high demand, and if produced in sufficient quantities, they have a greater chance of being sold to the markets. Although the community in Vulindlela is not eager to buy from the community garden, they seem to like potatoes and there is always a demand for them. The problem is that when the potato season is over, the food garden practitioners suffer tremendously because it is the only produce they are able to sell to the community. Proceeds from the sale of potatoes have helped them to create a fund which they use to finance basic inputs, and community garden members are allowed to borrow money from the fund interest-free. This has enabled members of the community garden to save money that they would have paid with interest had they borrowed

from loan sharks. However the sustainability of such a fund is questionable, considering the fact that ground crops are affected by seasonality.

5.12 Conclusion

Findings revealed that food garden practitioners in Msunduzi Municipality are primarily women between the ages of thirty-six and sixty-one years, and that they rely on locally available resources to cultivate and maintain their crops. The main aim and vision of the sampled community gardens is to produce food for household consumption and for the market. This is done to reduce the level of food insecurity and to improve nutrition at household level, as well as to create additional income opportunities.

But the gardens have not been able to fulfil this vision due to environmental factors such as climate change and seasonality, lack of adequate resources, and lack of access to the markets. These factors have affected crop production adversely. It was also noted that the resources that food garden practitioners have at their disposal are not adequate, and this has impacted on their farming practices and production. The level of education of food garden practitioners was very low. They had lower primary education.

The highest level of education was grade ten, and 30% of the respondents never went to school. This high level of illiteracy serves as evidence that South Africa is still faced with the vestiges of the apartheid system. The practitioners defined security in a broad sense, not only in terms of food. Their definition included a very important dimension of food security which is not limited to food access and availability (Guha-Khasnabis et al, 2007:15).

This dimension included other factors such as poor health, illiteracy and lack of access to social services as well as a state of vulnerability and powerlessness.

They talked about clothes, taxis, and the nearest health care facility. For these people, food security means having access to all the necessary resources and assets, tangible and intangible. Others in the focus groups defined food insecurity as having no access to employment opportunities, resources, skills and training. In an individual interview, a respondent defined food insecurity as “lack of regular access to adequate, decent and sustainable livelihoods.” Most food garden practitioners lack education and training on basic agricultural skills, and this raises the importance of institutional support as a vital social capital.

Sufficient production inputs such as seeds and fertilizers, gardening tools and other resources are important in facilitating sustainable livelihoods. Water, land and security of tenure are some of the resources that play a role in enabling communities and individual households to engage in sustainable food gardening. The lack of access to adequate land has inevitably affected small scale farmers in Imbali township who, as a result of not having adequate access to land, have resorted in using small pieces of land in their vicinity, owned by the municipality.

CHAPTER SIX: POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

6.1 Introduction

As indicated in previous Chapters, food garden projects are seen as food generation strategies that members of households in different communities may employ to improve their food security status. This view is supported by many other scholars who believe that agriculture is the cornerstone of economic development and sustainable livelihoods. The IDS Bulletin (June 2005:1) pointed out that “getting agriculture moving” seems to be the only feasible solution to address the scarcity of food which has left many African countries hungry.

In line with policy changes in South Africa that seek to eliminate poverty and hunger, the ANC-led government has introduced a number of programmes aimed at reducing hunger, through creating employment opportunities for people affected by food insecurity. The Department of Agriculture has worked in partnership with other government departments, NGO’s, state enterprises and municipalities to mobilize communities to participate in food gardening and other economic empowerment opportunities, with a view to improve sustainable livelihoods.

Both the effectiveness and sustainability of such programmes have been the subject of debate. Some have attributed the failure of these programmes and policies to corruption, incompetency and a general lack of adequate institutional support. This Chapter looks at the role of institutions, both government and non-governments, in supporting community based efforts to fight food insecurity in the Msunduzi Municipality. Poor people in rural and semi-urban areas, including townships, are vulnerable to adverse shocks and events outside their control. “They are often treated badly by the institutions of state and society and excluded from voice and power in these institutions” (UNESCO, 2003).

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework challenges institutions doing food security and community development to work in ways that reflect the reality of people affected by food insecurity. It allows for a focus on institutional structures and processes, such as the capacity of institutions to implement food security policy and programmes.

6.2. Processes Involved in the Establishment of Homestead and Community Gardens

According to the Department of Agriculture in KwaZulu-Natal, the procedure followed to establish homestead and community gardens differ. For community gardens, community members approach the department if there is a need for such a project in the area. They do so through the extension officer assigned to the area who is tasked with a duty to assist new applicants and to submit the applications to the Project Planning Committee (see table 7.1).

Table 6.1 The Seven-step process of forming a community garden in KwaZulu-Natal

Step 1	Extension Officers or the interested parties identify agricultural problems and farmers mobilise themselves to seek advice/guidance from the Extension Officers.
Step 2	The farmers or interest group in the community write a project proposal to the Department of Agriculture through the Extension Officers assigned to the area, who work hand in hand with the local District office.
Step 3	According to the department official who participated in the interview, the application for new projects is submitted to Project Planning Committee, which then does the feasibility and viability study of the project. The committee consists of senior crops and conservation

	officers, and agricultural engineers. The Bio-Resource unit of the committee deals with what crops can be planted in the area.
Step 4	The Project Planning Committee presents the findings at the Regional Technical Working Group meeting.
Step 5	If the project is approved, a Project Implementation Committee is Formed to oversee the establishment and implementation of the project.
Step 6	The Project Implementation Committee hires a contractor to put up the infrastructure. The infrastructure includes; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fencing • Irrigation system • Training of project members • Provision of fertilisers and seeds
	When the infrastructure is in place and operational, it is handed over to the garden members.

According to the respondents, the approach used in establishing a community garden is both people-centred and sustainability oriented, since the decision-making process concerning the problems of the community and the solutions thereof are identified by the community itself. The respondent from the Department of Agriculture indicated that there are about forty community gardens established by the department in the Umgungundlovu District. About a quarter of these gardens are in the Msunduzi Municipality. Most of these projects are no longer functional, which raises a question about the sustainability of the projects and the level of institutional support afforded to them.

The respondents did not have a good understanding of what steps were followed when establishing a new community garden. Most of them were not conversant with the policy on community food gardens. This lack of knowledge about policies can easily hamper development, and it suggests that there is a lack of transparency and good governance on the part of the government. UNESCO (2003) argues that poor communities will remain poor if they are not empowered to participate in making the decisions that shape their lives. According to Deolalikar et al (2002), good governance is crucial and it includes transparency and accountability in public decision-making. Good governance also includes greater participation of citizens and civil society in administrative decision-making, including policy-making.

6.3 Support Provided to Food Gardens

The homestead gardens programme in the Msunduzi Municipality is funded by foreign governments, and it is coordinated by the Provincial Food Security Office situated in Cedara. The programme implementation was outsourced to LIMA Rural Foundation. The beneficiaries include people facing food insecurity and poverty. Seeds, fencing and other resources are distributed seasonally by extension officers in partnership with LIMA.

The homestead garden beneficiaries are criticising the programme however for not addressing their resource and inputs needs adequately. Some thought that more resources are needed, and that the provision of seeds was not sufficient. One of the most important resources identified by respondents in Vulindlela was fencing. While it was observed that some homestead gardens were fenced in this area, the majority of them was unfenced, exposing them to damage from livestock – a situation which is rife in the area. Although fencing was also presented as a vital resource in Imbali Township, since without it their product is exposed to theft, the land shortage was at the top of the list. As it was indicated in Chapter Five, many

people in Imbali Township are using the land that is outside their yards for crop production.

The support services that the Department of Agriculture, in partnership with LIMA and other NGO's offer include the Liming Programme. Through the liming programme, soil samples are analysed. The rainfall has caused too much soil erosion which has taken away essential minerals in the soil. It was indicated during the interviews that about 167 hectares of land have been limed, at 7 tons of lime per hectare. The programme is quite new and "more resources are yet to be made available."

Many emerging black farmers have been provided with land through the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme. According to the Department of Agriculture, one of the challenges they face when implementing the programme is that "most of the beneficiaries are lazy and they expect the government to do everything for them." It is easy for people to be labelled as "lazy" when in fact they do not have access to key resources and assets that will enable them to sustain their livelihoods. Agriculture does not just require labour alone, it also requires that people be given access to key necessities which are hard to achieve. The poor have no networks that connect them to agri-processing, irrigation systems and market associations. Another challenge relates to the misuse of funds which often results in conflicts among members.

Another programme offered by the Department of Agriculture is called the Mechanization Programme. According to the respondent, the beneficiaries of this programme are poverty stricken people from rural areas. The programme assists food farmers with disking and ploughing. However the problem is that it does not assist homestead and community gardens due budgetary constraints. If the programme was available to community food garden projects it would have made

a big difference, since in some community garden projects, such as Zimiseleni in Vulindlela which is 18 ha, it is difficult for members to prepare such extensive tracts of land by hand.

Rukuni (2011:216) argues that agricultural production will surely improve if small farmers, especially community gardens, have access to appropriate machinery that reduces labour. It would be even more beneficial if this machinery can be locally manufactured and made available at reasonable prices. One of the challenges facing the Department of Agriculture is that the machinery is very expensive and that when it is broken it is difficult to fix it due to the fact that there are limited technicians in the province.

The division of land into smaller plots seems to be able to address this issue since each member has an area that can be worked without the machinery. But some community garden members have health problems which make it difficult for them to contribute equally in terms of labour.

Access to the markets is mainly facilitated by LIMA. Their officials assist community garden members in securing deals with the markets. There is a potential problem that one can foresee, whereby people will not have access to the markets after LIMA and the Department of Agriculture have terminated their services in the sampled areas. It was established during the interviews that people in the community do know which markets their produce is taken to. They did not have a direct relationship with the markets because LIMA is always there for them; hence they have not seen a need to engage in a productive direct partnership with the markets.

Pest control and fertilization is also facilitated by LIMA in partnership with the Department of Agriculture. Training is provided to teach people to make compost and home-made pesticides. It seems that there is a need for ongoing training since

most people did not seem to be aware of home-made pest control techniques. Some (especially those in community gardens) indicated that they did know how to make compost and home-made pesticides, but the majority of them had never tried to implement the knowledge after training. Another challenge is that the majority, almost 99% of people partaking in homestead gardens, were never trained due to capacity and budgetary constraints on the part of the institutions.

In Sen's words (1997:40), the capability to function optimally “represents the various combinations of functionings that the person can achieve.” Education plays an important role in community development, as it empowers people and increases their capacity to sustain their livelihoods. In terms of the findings, community garden members in both sampled areas, including some household garden members in Vulindlela, were trained in basic crop production, maintenance and management skills. The respondents in both areas indicated that they were experiencing difficulties in controlling pests, as they do not have access to pesticides. LIMA and the Department of Agriculture do not supply them with pesticides as they do not have a budget to do so. Community facilitators indicated that training was provided which focused on alternative household control methods that do not require too much money.

The Department of Agriculture was asked why their homestead garden programme has not delivered the desired results, and the response was that there are many challenges that hamper the successful implementation of the programme. This includes some beneficiaries becoming too dependent on the state to the extent that they do not want to do anything to improve their livelihoods. Some are selling the production inputs that have been given to them, and they want continuous support of which the department cannot afford to provide.

There is an apparent communication breakdown between the government and civil society. There are times when LIMA does not know what the Department of Agriculture is doing. This lack of communication suggests that these institutions operate independently of one another. This is causing confusion for the people. They end up not knowing the right person to turn to when they need something. The government, combined with the private sector and civil society, have the necessary capacity to take this country to its greatest heights. There is a need for an integrated approach that involves all departments, civil society and the business sector. This intersectoral and interdepartmental collaboration can be a solution to addressing bottlenecks in infrastructure, congestion and personnel shortages. Having an integrated voice can help to eliminate wasteful duplication of services (Turok, 2010).

While the production input packs supplied by government through its Flagship programmes are beneficial, it is important to note that programmes targeting a specific area of relief may miss the global picture. As it was indicated in the previous Chapter, people's definition of food insecurity is not limited to unavailability of food, or lack of access to food. Their definition goes as far as mentioning clothing and educational needs, since children affected by food insecurity are not able to progress in school. They also defined food insecurity in terms of their inability to access social capital, such as public services. If development is to meet the range of needs, including abstract, dignity and self-reliance needs, it must be more than a once off, short term and repetitive relief operation (Swanepoel, 1997:8). It must be geared towards "total transformation".

Efforts should be made to ensure that the production inputs "do not fall into the wrong hands", as it was put by the project beneficiaries. By "the wrong hands" they mean that proper procedures are not followed when the production inputs are distributed. This has led to a situation where seeds are received by people who do

not partake in food gardens, simply by virtue of being “politically connected”. It is interesting to know that the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework goes as far as challenging institutions such as the Department of Agriculture and LIMA. It is important to work in ways that reflect the reality of people affected by food insecurity, engaging in effective strategic planning with them so that the priorities for the goals they set and challenges they intend to face can be made clear (Swanepoel, 1977:182).

6.4 Sustainability of Development Efforts

The Department of Agriculture does not have the capacity to deal with issues of food security alone. The resources that the department has at its disposal are not sufficient to cater for the needs of farmers, including food gardens. The respondent from the Department of Agriculture pointed out that in terms of the plan, extension officers are supposed to visit food garden projects at least once a week, for a period of four months.

The challenge they are facing is that there are not enough cars to transport extension officers to the sites. The Department of Agriculture also mentioned that they are not able to get enough young graduates from universities because they are often lured by the private sector that offers high salaries. This leaves the department with no adequate staff to implement its programmes. This has also impacted the department’s monitoring and evaluation systems, which appear to be ineffective. Rukuni(2011:217) pointed out that there is a need for African countries to invest more in Research and Development (R&D), as well as monitoring and evaluation. Rukuni believes that the inability of governments in the Southern African region to invest in R&D has rendered their agricultural systems ineffective. This has also led to poor, inadequate and unclear policies and strategies.

While programmes are given technical support to prepare them for “independence”, the shortage of staff seems to have impacted negatively on the capacity of the department to provide adequate support to food garden projects. This lack of adequate support has also impacted adversely on the sustainability of the programmes that the department provides. Another respondent indicated that communication between the NGO’s and the Department of Agriculture is very poor. In some cases new programmes are implemented without them having been informed, and this creates confusion in communities who are serviced by the NGO’s such as LIMA.

The time frames used by the Department of Agriculture are different from those used by the NGO’s. The department has a different time frame for each programme. When it comes to supporting food garden projects, LIMA provides technical support for a period of three years. LIMA communicates this time frame to the beneficiaries from the onset of the project. As the project continues, the beneficiaries are reminded about the time frame and about a need for them to be “independent and self-reliant”.

Another factor that may compromise the sustainability of programmes implemented by NGO’s is that the traditional funding sources for NGOs are drying up and government grants have been reduced for various reasons. It should be remembered that these NGO’s contribute about 30% of the civil services in South Africa, and they are critical to meeting food security needs of civil society in the country. Other social commentators have attributed this crisis to the fact that South Africa is viewed as a middle income economy, and this has resulted in decreased funding opportunities for development programmes in the country (www.ngopulse.org – accessed on 22/11/2011).

6.5 Conclusion

It can not be denied that the support offered by the Department of Agriculture and other organizations such as LIMA does have a positive impact on the lives of people affected by food insecurity and poverty. These institutions continue to provide support to the food garden practitioners in the form of capacity building and they also provide them with basic production inputs. The problem is that these inputs are not adequate and training is provided to a few people due to budgetary constraints. There are many challenges that hamper the successful implementation of the programme. The government does not have the required capacity to provide continuous support and this has compromised the sustainability of the programmes.

The Department of Agriculture does not have enough personnel to be able to respond to the ever growing need for support and advice in poor communities. There is an immense need for information sharing and capacity building at grassroots level. This need is usually not met due to the limited time that the department's technical officers have at their disposal. They end up distributing inputs to the farmers instead of spending time with them, listening to their needs and wants. More support needs to be given to the farmers and projects located far away from the city. They need to be assisted to get their produce to the markets in an efficient way. Agri-processing access to the markets and soil engineering seem to be the major problems that need to be prioritised.

Sustainability as well as monitoring and evaluation seem to be the two major obstacles that hamper agricultural development. Measures need to be taken to ensure that projects are able to thrive in spite of environmental hindrances. Young people need to be enticed to partake in agriculture to ensure long-term sustainability. Monitoring and evaluation need to be prioritised so that good projects can be identified and recognised. Help seems to be channelled towards

cooperatives, while food gardens are often ignored when it comes to programmes such as the mechanization programme. Given that the findings revealed that most people who partake in food gardens are adult women, some of whom have health challenges, the mechanization programme can go a long way in helping them with soil preparation and harvesting.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Summary

It was established that definitions of food security in the literature focus on issues of availability, access and utilisation, and thus overlook a very important dimension of food security, which is food generation. For food to be available, accessed and utilised, it needs to be generated at local level, where it can be easily accessed by poor people who have limited financial resources.

Findings revealed, among other things, that food garden practitioners in the Msunduzi Municipality are mainly women between the ages of thirty-six and sixty-one years, and that they rely on locally available resources to cultivate and maintain their crops. The main aim and vision of the sampled community gardens is to produce food for household consumption and for the market. This is done to reduce the level of food insecurity and to improve nutrition at household level, as well as to create additional income opportunities.

It is noteworthy that the gardens have not succeeded in fulfil this vision due to environmental factors such as climate change and seasonality, lack of adequate resources, which has affected production negatively, and lack of access to the markets. There are no formal structures in place to oversee the day to day running of the community gardens, and this raises questions about the long-term sustainability of the community gardens. It was also noted that the resources that food garden practitioners have at their disposal are not adequate, and this has impacted their farming practices and production. The level of education of food garden practitioners was very low. They had lower primary education. The highest level of education was grade ten, and 30% of the respondents never went to school. This high level of illiteracy serves as evidence that South Africa is still faced with the vestiges of the apartheid system.

As it was noted in previous Chapters, the respondents defined food security in a broad sense, not only in terms of food, but from the wider perspective of general improvement in their well-being. The practitioners defined food security in a broad sense, and their definition included a very important dimension of food security which is not limited to food access and availability. They defined security of food in terms of access to health and school facilities, access to cash to support agricultural inputs, access to water and irrigation schemes. Thus access to food is only a component or an achievement that conflates with other access issues.

People in the Msunduzi Municipality are faced with problems such as poor health, illiteracy and lack of access to social services as well as a state of vulnerability and powerlessness. That is why they talk about clothes, taxi, nearest health care facility. For these people, food security means having access to all the necessary resources and assets, tangible and intangible. Others in the focus groups defined food insecurity as having no access to employment opportunities, resources, skills and training. In an individual interview, a respondent defined food insecurity as “lack of regular access to adequate, decent and sustainable livelihoods”. Most food garden practitioners lack education and training on basic agricultural skills, and this underlines the importance of institutional support as a vital social capital.

Food availability alone cannot address the food insecurity problem in African Countries. It has come to light that irrespective of food availability, food insecurity can still occur, even if nutritious and safe food supplies were adequate and markets were functioning well. Even in first world countries where food is in abundant supply, people can still go hungry if they cannot afford to buy food. That is why Seaman et al (2000:1) views this as a crucial insight, since there is no “technical reason for markets to meet subsistence needs, and no moral or legal reason why they should.”

The important thing is that people must be able to access food. Since it is clear that food cannot be accessed by everyone at any given time, due to high prices and the fact that the majority of our population is unemployed, the focus should be on how food can be generated in such a way that it becomes easily accessible to everyone, including poor people. Hence other sources of food, other than “trade-based entitlements” need to be explored. According to Wilber and Jameson, entitlements refer to “the set of commodity bundles” that individual households in the community can obtain at any given time, using their labour power (1992:15).

Sufficient production inputs such as seeds and fertilizers, gardening tools and other resources are important in facilitating sustainable livelihoods. Water, land and security of tenure are some of the resources that play a role in enabling communities and individual households to engage in sustainable food gardening. This has inevitably affected small scale farmers in Imbali township who, as a result of not having adequate access to land, have resorted to using small pieces of land in their vicinity that are owned by the municipality.

The Department of Agriculture in partnership with LIMA and other NGO’s are providing support to the food garden practitioners in the form of capacity-building. They also provide them with basic production inputs. The problem is that these inputs are not adequate and training was provided to few people due to budgetary constraints. There are many challenges that hamper the successful implementation of the programme. It is a challenge that some beneficiaries have become too dependent on the state to the extent that they do not know what to do to improve their livelihoods. Some are selling the production inputs that have been given to them, and they want continuous support of which the department cannot afford to provide. The government does not have the required capacity to provide

continuous support and this has compromised the sustainability of the programmes.

It emerged from the findings of this study that food gardens can indeed assist in terms of improving livelihoods, but the sustainability of these livelihoods is questionable. This is attributable to the lack of adequate resources and assets that people can utilise to construct sustainable livelihoods. People lack access to essential and crucial resources, and the government does not have the capacity to provide these resources. South Africa is also facing serious structural and economic issues and governance challenges. As Rukuni asserts, issues of food security can no longer be divorced from issues of politics, governance and power (Rukuni, 2011:207).

The government's failure to adhere to sound governance practices has rendered the public service ineffective and inefficient. For example, the poorly managed education system in South Africa is somewhat related to food security at both the micro and macro levels. At the micro level, illiterate individuals are less productive, and they are usually trapped in low-paying occupations and remain at very low levels in terms of standard of living. At the macro level, nations with illiterate or less-educated citizens cannot progress well, as the country cannot increase its outputs substantially; as a result people endure a low standard of living (UNESCO, 2003).

While it is true that the government of South Africa has done a great deal in addressing inequalities of the past in terms of education, the findings revealed that more still needs to be done to ensure that all people who are illiterate are accommodated in the job market, and that our children have access to an equal, effective and efficient education system.

7.2 Recommendations

7.2.1 Policy and Institutional Support

Policy efforts directed towards food gardens should be developed and implemented in a manner that is participatory and people-centred. The government should ensure that such policies are developed in a manner that is simple, in a language that is understandable to poor people and in a manner that seeks to empower poor people. It is futile to have good policies if people cannot understand them. These policies should seek to improve the institutional environment in which these food garden practitioners operate. The government, as the custodian of food security in the country, needs to ensure that these policies not only focus on the formulation of the food projects, they need to go beyond that by ensuring that the projects are sustainable.

7.2.2 Measuring Sustainability

Community Development institutions, including government departments, need to ensure that they have clear monitoring and evaluation systems that are able to determine whether or not the projects are sustainable.

7.2.3 Resource Redistribution and Infrastructure Development

Access to assets and resources remains a big challenge facing development institutions in South Africa. It is said that 50% of African farmers still live five hours away from a market, mainly due to poor road infrastructure and limited transport availability in these areas. Additionally, transport costs have escalated considerably in the past few years. Transport costs in Africa are among the highest in the world. Poor infrastructure has left many farmers effectively isolated from regional and international markets (Rukuni, 2011:216). Agricultural production will

surely improve if food garden practitioners, especially community gardens, have access to appropriate machinery that reduces labour. It would be even more beneficial if this machinery can be locally manufactured and made available at reasonable prices. One of the challenges facing the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries is that the machinery is very expensive and that when it is broken it is difficult to fix due to the fact that there are limited technicians in the province.

7.2.4 Improved Agricultural Systems

Investment in Research and Development in South Africa is very low, and this needs to change if real change and development is what the government of South Africa aspires to. The lack of R&D has led to a political and economic environment which is neither conducive nor enabling. This has also limited the expertise base in the department, evident in the department's poor skills in planning, analysis and policy formulation. The Department of Agriculture needs to consider investing more in Research and Development.

7.2.5 Intersectoral and Interdepartmental Collaboration

Government departments, the business sector and the civil society need to come together to work as a unit in order to speed up service delivery and resource redistribution to the poor. This can also help to improve communication patterns and to prevent unnecessary duplication of services.

7.2.6 Further research into the topic

There are many community and household gardens in South Africa. Their ability to contribute to sustainable livelihoods needs to be continually assessed. Not enough research has been done in this field. I therefore recommend that further research be conducted to expand the knowledge base on the topic.

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ANNEXURE 1 : INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY GARDENS

SECTION A

- Name of interviewee:
- Gender:
- Age:
- Highest level of educational schooling or educational training:
- Number of people in the household:
- Who is the head of the family?
- Number of people in the household who are employed and occupation:
- Average monthly income:
- Do you have a home garden? Why?
- Do you partake in a community garden?
- How long have you been partaking in the community garden?
- What motivated you to partake in the community garden?

SECTION B

1. How do people define food security?

- I. In your view what constitutes food security?

II. In your view what constitutes food insecurity?

2. How do people perceive sustainability?

- I. When do you consider yourself most food secure?
- II. Where do you derive food from?
- III. What do you do to cope with food insecurity?
- IV. Who is responsible for providing food in this household?
- V. What do you do when the food is finished?
- VI. How long does food last in your household?
- VII. What do you think you need in order to be food secure?
- VIII. Do you agree that development programmes should bring about change that stays for a long time? Why?
- IX. For how long do you think this change should last? Why?

3. Do people in the area possess adequate skills and resources that they can utilize when constructing their livelihoods?

- I. Could you tell me when was your communal garden established and who owns the land? If you don't own the land who owns it? Do you pay the rent?
- II. What is the demand for a community garden plot in your area? If there is a waiting list could you indicate how long the list is?
- III. Who provides fencing and irrigation system?
- IV. What inputs are used in the gardens that you are involved in and how do you take care of them?
- V. Do you think you have adequate resources to run these projects? If your answer is no could you share with me what resources are you in need of, and who do you think should provide those resources?
- VI. Have you had any training that equipped you in running and managing community gardens? If yes who provided this training and how helpful has this training been to you?

- VII. Can you give examples of how you used the information gained from the training and how do you plan to use it in the future.
 - VIII. Do you think social connections/networks are important to the success of your community food gardens? Please explain.
- 4. Are the projects provided by external agencies sustainable?**
- I. Using your definition of sustainability, do you think that the community food gardens you are involved in are sustainable?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HOUSEHOLD GARDENS

SECTION A

- Name of interviewee:
- Gender:
- Age:
- Highest level of educational schooling or educational training:
- Number of people in the household:
- Number of people in the household who are employed and occupation:
- Average monthly income:
- Do you have a home garden?
- Do you partake in a community garden? Why?
- How long have you been partaking in the community garden?
- What motivated you to partake in your household garden?

1. How do people define food security?

- II. In your view what constitutes food security?
- III. In your view what constitutes food insecurity?

2. How do people perceive sustainability?

- 3. When do you consider yourself most food secure?
- 4. Where do you derive food from?

5. What do you do to cope with food insecurity?
6. Who is responsible for providing food in this household?
7. What do you do when the food is finished?
8. How long does food last in your household?
9. What do you think you need in order to be food secure?
10. Do you agree that development programmes should bring about change that stays for a long time? Why?
11. For how long do you think this change should last? Why?

12. Do people in the area possess adequate skills and resources that they can utilize when constructing their livelihoods?

Could you tell me when did you start your household garden?

Do you own the land? If not who owns it and do you pay rent?

Who provides fencing and irrigation system for you garden?

What inputs are used in your garden and how do you take care of them?

Do you think you have adequate resources to maintain your garden? If your answer is no could you share with me what resources are you in need of, and who do you think should provide those resources?

Have you had any training that equipped you in maintaining your garden? If yes who provided this training and how helpful has this training been to you?

Can you give examples of how you used the information gained from the training and how do you plan to use it in the future.

Do you think social connections/networks are important to the success of your garden as well as other food gardens in the area? Please explain.

13. Are the projects provided by external agencies sustainable?

Using your definition of sustainability, do you think that your food garden is sustainable?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY FACILITATORS

14. How do people define food security?

In your view as a facilitator, what constitutes food security and insecurity?

15. How do people perceive sustainability?

What comes to your mind when you hear the word “sustainability”?

16. Do people in the area possess adequate skills and resources that they can utilize when constructing their livelihoods?

What kind of support do you give to the communities you are working with?

Do you think that they have adequate resources to maintain their projects?

If your answer is no could you share with me what resources are they in need of, and who do you think should provide those resources?

Do you provide capacity building to the communities you is working with, if yes can you please explain how?

Can you describe the aims and objectives of providing this training to the beneficiaries?

What are some of the topics covered by the training?

How would your organization like to see the beneficiaries utilize the skills?

Do you think social connections/networks are important to the success of these projects? Please explain.

17. Are the projects provided by external agencies sustainable?

Does the programme aim to bring immediate or long-term relief to its beneficiaries?

Using your definition of sustainability, do you think that your food garden is sustainable?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY LEADERS

18. How do people define food security?

In your view as a community leader, what constitutes food security and insecurity?

19. How do people perceive sustainability?

What is your definition of sustainability? Please provide examples.

20. Do people in the area possess adequate skills and resources that they can utilize when constructing their livelihoods?

What kind of support do you give to your community members who are involved in food gardening? Please explain.

Do you think that they have adequate resources to maintain their projects?

If your answer is no could you share with me what resources are they in need of, and who do you think should provide those resources?

Do you think social connections/networks are important to the success of these projects? Please explain.

21. Are the projects provided by external agencies sustainable?

Using your definition of sustainability, do you think that these food gardens are sustainable?

ANNEXURE 2 :FOCUS GROUP GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY GARDENS

How many people are partaking in your community garden?

22. How do people define food security?

what do you think constitutes food security and insecurity?

23. How do people perceive sustainability?

24. What do you do to cope with draughts and seasonality

25. What do you do when your crops are finished?

How long do you think your crops should last? And what do you think is needed to achieve that?

26. Do people in the area possess adequate skills and resources that they can utilize when constructing their livelihoods?

What kind of support do you get and who provides this support?

Do you think that you have adequate resources to maintain your project? If your answer is no could you share with me what resources are you in need of, and who do you think should provide those resources?

Do you think social connections/networks are important to the success of your project? Please explain.

27. Are the projects provided by external agencies sustainable?

Using your definition of sustainability, do you think that these food gardens are sustainable?

ANNEXURE 3 : INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER FOR COMMUNITY GARDEN PARTICIPANTS (FOCUS GROUP)

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Petros Jabulo Madlala (known as Njabulo), a master's student in the department of social work and community development (University of KwaZulu Natal), under the supervision of Professor P.M. Sithole.

My research project is about food security. I am exploring the role of community and household food gardens in providing sustainable livelihoods. The information you give me is intended to inform development organizations, agricultural researchers and change agents about the value of food gardens and the importance of sustainability.

Focus group discussions will be held wherein you will be requested to participate. Some questions will be asked to you and discussed as a group. There will be only one focus group meeting in your area that you will be requested to attend. You were selected because you are a member of a community food garden.

Participants will not be paid to participate but there will be refreshments during meetings. No video or audio recording will take place during the meetings and any photographs taken will be shown to you immediately after they have been taken.

All information will be treated with absolute confidentiality and your name will not appear on any documentation. Notes will be taken during meetings, and they will be stored in my personal storage, they will be destroyed upon completion of the project. Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at any time.

CONTACT DETAILS:

Researcher: Petros Jabulo Madlala (known as Njabulo)

Contact Details: 033 3428 971 or 082 8648 292

Supervisor: Pearl Mpilo Sithole

Contact Details: 031 2602 288

DECLARATION

I, _____(full names of participant)

Hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this consent letter and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the project.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT _____ DATE _____

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER FOR INTERVIEWS

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Petros Jabulo Madlala (known as Njabulo), a master's student in the department of social work and community development (University of KwaZulu Natal), under the supervision of Professor P.M. Sithole.

My research project is about food security. I am exploring the role of community and household food gardens in providing sustainable livelihoods. The information you give me is intended to inform development organizations, agricultural researchers and change agents about the value of food gardens and the importance of sustainability.

I will be visiting you at your home to conduct an individual interview with you. During this interview questions will be posed to you and you will be requested to participate. You were selected because you own a household food garden.

As a participant you will not be paid. No video or audio recording will take place during the interview and any photographs taken will be shown to you immediately after they have been taken.

All information will be treated with absolute confidentiality and your name will not appear on any documentation. Notes will be taken during meetings, and they will be stored in my personal storage, they will be destroyed upon completion of the project. Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at any time.

CONTACT DETAILS:

Researcher: Petros Jabulo Madlala (known as Njabulo)

Contact Details: 033 3428 971 or 082 8648 292

Supervisor: Pearl Mpilo Sithole

Contact Details: 031

DECLARATION

I, _____(full names of participant)

Hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this consent letter and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the project.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT _____ DATE _____

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